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# STORY OF A TROOPER.

WITH MUCH OF INTEREST CONCERNING THE  
CAMPAIGN ON THE PENINSULA,  
NOT BEFORE WRITTEN.

By F. COLBURN ADAMS,

AUTHOR OF CHRONICLES OF THE BASTILE; OUR WORLD; THE OUTCAST; ADVENTURES  
OF MAJOR ROGER SHERMAN POTTER, &c., &c.

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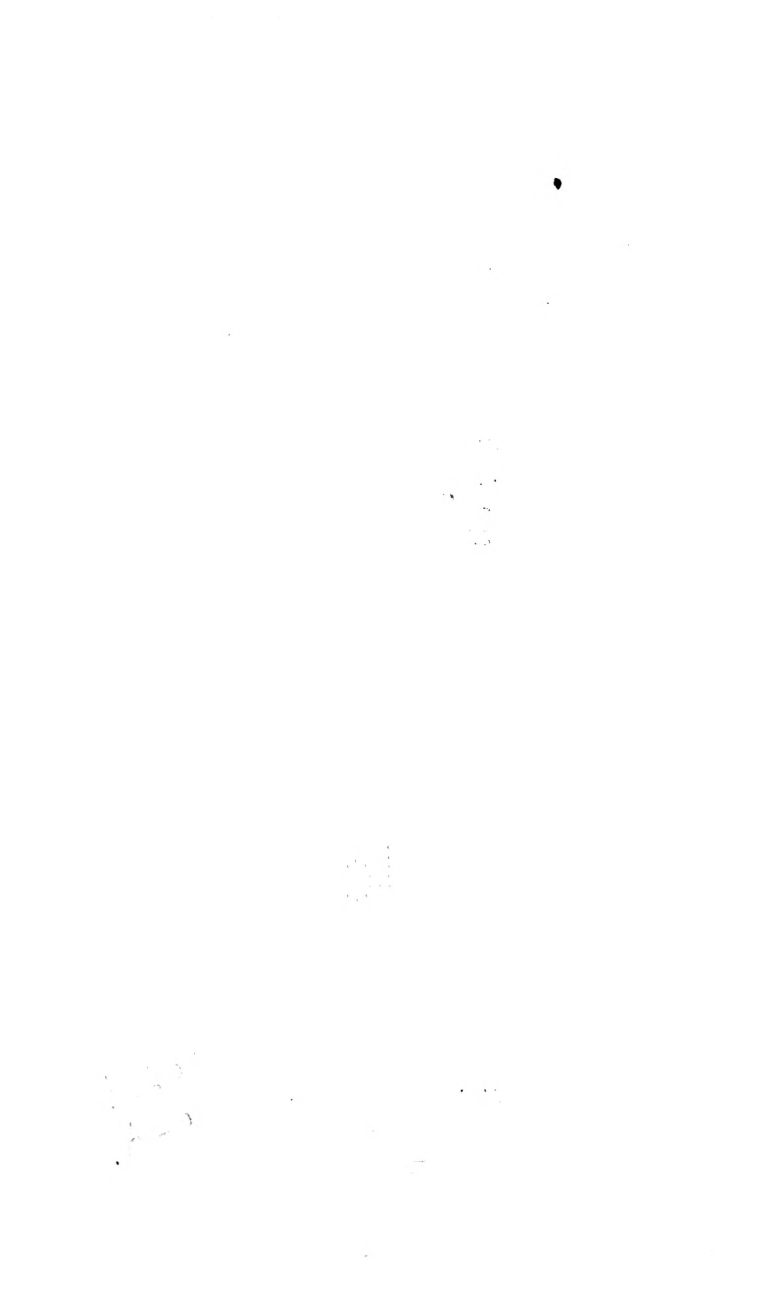
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## CHAPTER I.

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### INTRODUCTION.

For more than forty years a timid old man, who never had an established principle of his own, had trafficked in political popularity and the opinions of others, until he found himself at the head of and guiding the destinies of a great people. The fears of this timid old man were always uppermost, and where a long road was open to wrong he was sure to take it, in preference to a short one leading to right. This timid old man now sat trembling at the head of the nation, and ready to yield it a prey to the revolution he had done so much to bring on. The North regretted him, and the South had used him. But when he had served her purpose, aided her in trampling upon the dearest rights of humanity, and insulting the manliness of the North, she cast him aside as a thing of no further use, to be looked back to and remembered by the people with a feeling of sorrow. This timid old man—now forgotten even in the contempt of his countrymen, and on whose tombstone some future hand should write : “Died for want of a principle”—had hopes and fears in abundance. He was

uncertain in everything, certain in nothing. If he anchored to one thing to-day, he was sure to shift his ground and place himself upon another to-morrow. Traitors used him as they would a mould ; he was always ready to be shaped to their wishes ; and now, when the follies of the South, which he had done so much to encourage during his political lifetime, had brought revolution and its attendant horrors on the country, he stood amazed and like a powerless child. War was a stern reality, but the shocks it was producing on the country failed to awake him from his treacherous dream. He still hoped, still feared, still wanted to wait.

And now this timid old man, dupe of demagogues and object of the patriot's pity, has passed from power, almost from the thoughts of his countrymen, and left his country to struggle for existence in war and confusion. He has gone into unenviable exile, and sorrow be to the historian who shall attempt to purify his name.

A ruder, but a man of higher purpose and better character, had risen up and taken the destinies of the people into his hands. He was to decide whether the Republic should live or die, whether we should have one nation or a divided people. But scarcely had he taken his place at the head of the nation, when the clash of arms was heard in South Carolina, and Sumter fell. The nation's flag had been insulted by those who had needed its protection most, and the echo of the guns that worked Sumter's fall awoke the insulted people of the North from their dull, deep dream of

peace and prosperity. Still they were like children confused with a new toy. Untrained to the arts and hardships of war, they rushed to the field as if a soldier's life was to be a feast of pleasure. New York formed the focus of this great excitement. She was quick to send her legions and pour out her wealth in support of the Government. You heard drums beating in every street; the great meeting had been held in Union Square, where patriots stirred the people, and even traitors promised never to be traitors again.

It was early in April, 1861. The President had issued his proclamation calling for seventy-five thousand troops to put down the rebellion. New York was quick to get herself into uniform, regardless of the regulations; and the Union Defense Committee had gone into the business of taking care of the nation and endorsing the loyalty of travelers bound on a journey to Washington. The military aspirations of men ran high indeed, and colonel's commissions were sought for by at least a regiment of worthies, few of whom knew anything of the profession of arms, or in truth any other honest profession. But they had a ready stock of honor, which they were willing to pledge at any time; could raise a regiment in a few weeks and bring their hosts into the field, to the terror of the enemy. Indeed, I am not so sure but that if the job of putting down the rebellion in a few weeks had been offered, there would have been any quantity of these gentlemen found ready to take it, confident of their own ability to perform what they undertook. In fine, the soldier fever was on us all, but we were for going to the war in our own way.

An eccentric gentleman, who had sold jewelry in Maiden Lane, thinking the Government might need an extra regiment or so of cavalry before the war was ended, had inserted in the *Herald* an advertisement, proposing a meeting at a hall on Broadway, for the purpose of considering measures to raise a regiment of volunteer cavalry. A Colonel was wanted, to whom would be presented a remarkable horse, of great value, and a near relation to Patchen. There was something attractive about the advertisement, as there also was about the wild, dashing life of a trooper. None but skillful horsemen were to apply, horsemanship being considered necessary to a useful trooper. It must be remembered that I am writing of what occurred before the Government made that greatest of military discoveries, that it is not necessary a man first learn to ride before you entrust him with a horse and equipments, and send him, disabled with carbine, sabre and pistols, into the field to fight the enemy. There were those inclined to set this ambitious dealer in jewelry down as a very indiscreet gentleman, to hazard his fortune on so dangerous an enterprise.

When night came, I found myself standing at the entrance of a long, narrow passage, dimly lighted, on the west side of Broadway, and leading to a hall used by a singing society. I was hesitating whether to enter, and began reading the big poster setting forth the object of the meeting. A thick-set gentleman passed in, then one of lean figure. I was about to go away, when a very tall man, in a slouch hat, muffled in a big cloak, and booted and spurred, passed in with a firm, military

step. He presented a true figure of the melancholy man in black, a name we afterwards gave him. His gait and manner so attracted my attention, that I followed him into the hall, which presented a somewhat quaint appearance, considering the military object of the meeting. The two rows of benches on the floor were occupied by about a dozen and a half demure looking gentlemen, while on the raised platform in front a dozen or so of very unmilitary looking men sat in a semi-circle. For a time no one seemed inclined to speak, and the meeting had an appearance of passing off with remarkable quietness. At length the gentleman from Maiden Lane came forward and, with a defective intonation, stated the object of the meeting, and was elected president. A young, active and intelligent man, of the name of Bailey, and who has since distinguished himself in several encounters with the enemy, was chosen secretary. We were told that Colonel Bayard Clarke, a gallant officer, and polished gentleman, had gone to Washington to offer his services to the Government to raise this regiment; that much depended on the encouragement he received there. He would return in a few days, when his report would be laid before us. Colonel Clarke had served in the regular cavalry, in the same regiment with Harney, and had distinguished himself for gallantry during the last Florida war. He had also served his country in Congress, and was now prompted by the purest motives, in offering his services to the Government. It is fair to presume that such a man knew something of cavalry, and that his services would have been exceedingly valuable to the Government.

There was now brought forward and introduced to us a small, dark-visaged man, quick of speech, and ornamented with the title of Major. I rarely ever saw a more unmilitary looking gentleman. According to the many accounts he gave of himself he had served in several armies, was a particular friend and old acquaintance of General Scott, and had particularly distinguished himself in Venezuela, in the wars of which he had brought off scars enough to satisfy us that he was a brave man. The Major had brought his sabre with him, and after discoursing in detail on the various uses of cavalry, setting forth in glowing terms how they could break a column and throw the enemy's line into confusion, how in charging upon and capturing a battery they must first draw the enemy's fire, he went through a few exhibitions of his skill in the use of the sabre. Cavalry, with him, was the finest flower of our army, and he had given his life to the study of its uses. The Major was indeed clever with the sabre, and we began to think we had a jewel of a trooper, under whose leadership we were all to be made famous in the history of the war. But he damaged his feathers somewhat by the wonderful accounts given of his own exploits performed in battles some of us had never heard of, and with which he would have entertained us until midnight, each of his exploits far surpassing in boldness anything done by Murat, Nolan, Cardigan, or Hodgson, but for an ill-looking and irrepressible Scotchman who shuffled to the edge of the platform and interrupted the speaker by requesting "to know" if a little time could not be granted him to relate his

exploits in India, which he was quite sure would exceed in terrible interest anything the gallant Major had done or indeed heard of in Venezuela. The Major yielded, and the chair gracefully granted his request.

Our Scotch friend was evidently an honest, simple-minded man, who spoke in a broad provincial accent, which, with a total disregard of Mr. Murray, and his rules of speech, afforded us much amusement. His figure, too, was not such as to produce grave misapprehensions, for he was a thick, solid man, excessively short of leg, and with a flat, bald head, and an inexpressive face. Indeed, he must have cut a sorry figure when mounted, either as a heavy or light horseman. But, according to his own account, he had been a terror to the natives of Oude, as well as Affghanistan. I noticed also that the dark-visaged Major listened to his stories with a solemn countenance, as if his feathers had fallen. Our Scotch friend was proud of the service he had seen, of his horsemanship, and of his skill with the sabre. He had served in her Majesty's heavy horse, also in the Bengal cavalry. As to the war in Affghanistan he had been all through it, and won laurels enough to make a hero of any man all the rest of his life. The Major might show his scars; they were the jewels every brave soldier wore; but he would show him more scars on a single leg. What he had done in battle was not all. He had had combats with tigers while serving under Hodgson, in Oude. On one occasion two of the desperate brutes attacked him, one at each leg, and would have unhorsed and devoured him but that his boots came off, and the hungry beasts ran into

a jungle thinking they had got his legs. A brisk Irish gentleman of the name of O'Mara, interrupting, wanted to know if tigers were not remarkably fond of breakfasting on one of her Majesty's fat troopers? This was rather too much for the sturdy trooper, who paused, rested both hands on his big stick, and for a minute seemed counseling his wits for an answer. "It is neither here nor there, gentlemen," said he, regaining confidence. "What I have said is God's truth, and I have letters enough to prove what I have said, at home." Here he changed the character of his discourse, and began giving us a few lessons on the best mode of securing a good seat, how to keep the bridle hand during a charge, and how with a swift back stroke of the sabre we could displace the head of an enemy at one blow. He now commenced flourishing his big stick with wonderful agility, making sundry strokes, until at length he brought it in contact with the young secretary's nose, much to the amusement of the audience and alarm of those in his immediate vicinity. The young secretary was not inclined to lose his temper, and taking the ancient trooper by the arms kindly assisted him into his seat, begging him to subside.

Mr. O'Mara, the bold Irish gentleman, now came forward as the next speaker. I must here say that this gentleman afterwards held a commission in the Tammany regiment, and behaved with great gallantry in the battle of Ball's Bluff. Mr. O'Mara had heard gentlemen who had served in the jungles of India, and gentlemen who had seen wonders in South America talk before ; but he could tell them there was no place



like the plains of America for a trooper to show his pluck. They might tell about breaking the enemy's columns, charging upon and capturing batteries, and all that sort of thing; but had either of them been out on the frontier fighting Indians? Here he cast a look of admonition at the ancient trooper and the little Major. He had served in the mounted rifles, and had an honorable discharge. He had been a Ranger, too, in Texas, and knew what it was to do good fighting on the plains. If any gentleman present thought he did not, all he had to do was to afford him an opportunity of satisfying him. The audience here laughed heartily, and the speaker becoming conscious that he had thrown down a challenge made a pleasant apology. O'Mara, was a good soldier and sensible man. He gave us some good advice in regard to the dangerous services cavalry had to perform, what had been done on the plains, how also to take care of horses, and indeed much more that was valuable relating to the internal economy of the service. "Gentlemen," said he, in conclusion, "I am an Irishman; but I love my adopted country, have served her faithfully, and am ready to serve her again. If you want a trooper, O'Mara is your man."

When the last speaker sat down, a tall, long-jointed and squint-eyed man, of the name of Carr, rose and made some very sensible remarks concerning cavalry and its use. It was no trifling matter to raise a regiment of cavalry, and the first question to be determined was, whether we could get skillful riders enough in New York to do it. There were men enough who could do fancy riding in the Park, but the kind of

riding necessary for the field, was a very different thing. No doubt, a majority of men would prefer going to the war a-horseback. It was a pleasanter way than tramping through the mud with a knapsack and musket on one's shoulders; but he could tell us there was not one man in ten you could ever make a trooper of. You might mount men in the saddle and call them cavalry, but unless they were expert riders, and trained to fight in the saddle, it was the readiest way in the world to get them killed off. And it was not pleasant to be killed for want of experience necessary to defend one's-self. Beside, unless cavalry were well drilled, it was a useless expense to the Government, and a costly incumbrance to the movements and efficiency of an army. He had lived in the South, and knew southern men to be very expert riders. Here he recounted what he had witnessed many of them perform in the tournament, and referred particularly to Ashby. He regarded it madness to go into the field until we were in a condition to cope with these men. Let, however, the regiment be raised, and he would take hold and assist. But we ought to first know whether the Government wanted cavalry.

The last speaker was succeeded by a gentleman in the body of the house. Mr. Briggs, for such was his name, took occasion to say that what the gentleman last up had said, was very discouraging to young men anxious and ready to enter the service. He knew from what he had read of the great hardships cavalry had to undergo, of the dangers of the service, as well as its attractions. But he had great faith in the adaptability

of the American character. Americans could learn to do anything and everything, perhaps not so thoroughly as some other people, but well enough for all necessary purposes, even war. If they undertook to make themselves familiar with the business of cavalry, they would do it, and quicker than any other people. This was the first attempt to raise a regiment of volunteer cavalry for the war, and he would have every man present brace up his patriotism, and put his shoulder to the wheel. We must learn the art of war, just as we had learned the various professions men followed. There was in Westchester county a gentleman of the name of Van Allen, who had made a move towards raising some cavalry. We had better open a communication with him, and see what our joint efforts would result in. He was for raising this regiment, and showing what could be done with volunteer cavalry. But he had understood from good authority, that the Government at Washington regarded cavalry with indifference.

Here the melancholy man in black, whom I had followed into the hall, rose, and laying aside his cloak, begged permission to say a few words. He did not come here to be the teacher of veterans, nor to take exception to what had been said by troopers who had served in India and Venezuela. He had traveled in Labrador, in Newfoundland, and Canada, where he had resided for many years. He did not know anything about this Mr. Van Allen, and would like a gentleman present to tell him if he knew anything about cavalry. Because, if he did not, he was sure to want to be Colonel of the regiment. He thought we had

better let Mr. Van Allen raise his own regiment. He would, however, like to know if this Mr. Van Allen was a bold, dashing man. For, without a bold, dashing leader, cavalry must be a dead weight about the neck of the army. A gentleman on the platform interrupted the speaker, by saying that this Van Allen had shown remarkable courage in an encounter (over a dinner table) with a famous Russian Count, and would, doubtless, when in battle, show himself a true man and a soldier. This did not seem to carry the popular sentiment, which was evidently against having anything to do with Van Allen and his troopers.

The melancholy man in black continued. He would have the regiment mounted on Canadian horses. They were tougher, and better adapted to stand the severity and exposure of a Virginia winter. He had seen some service himself, and had served in South America. In truth, he belonged to a cavalry family, and had a sabre of great weight and age, which had come down to him from his forefathers, and had a remarkable history. If he only had it with him, he would show them what could be done at a single stroke with the sabre. (This queer sabre afterwards became celebrated in the regiment, and was captured and returned to him by one of Imboden's officers.)

The night was now far advanced, and some eighteen or twenty persons having enrolled their names, the meeting adjourned to meet at Palace Garden, on the following night, and hear a report from Washington.

## CHAPTER II.

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### THE SECOND MEETING, AND THE QUESTION OF FUNDS.

When we met at Palace Garden there was a large increase to our numbers, many of them young men of the right kind to give a successful turn to our enterprise. We had got rid of her Majesty's talkative trooper and a few others, who were calculated to interrupt rather than advance any enterprise. At that time the *press* was a powerful aid to recruiting, and it had generously lent us its power in attracting attention to our undertaking. Among those who now joined us, and who afterwards figured honorably in the fortunes of the regiment, I will mention Joseph Stearns, Daniel Harkins, and a young man of erect figure, and remarkable for his beauty, of the name of Henry Hidden. There also joined us at this place a huge politician—a character so remarkable for his eccentricities, that I venture to assert this war has produced nothing to compare with him. His stories of himself were as entertaining, if not as reliable, as anything written of Don Quixote. No matter how absurd a story you told, he could beat you in one told with himself as the hero. His adventures in love, war and politics were numer-

ous as the stars. He had served in the Mexican war, but up to this day none of us have been able to discover in what capacity. He disclaimed ever having been a surgeon, and hints were thrown out that he might have been a sutler. He knew (at least he said he did) and was on intimate relations with all the great men of the country. In truth, General Scott always shook hands with him when he met him, and no man ever made him a bow who was not a particular friend. As I have said before, he was a man of ponderous figure, with a small, unintellectual head, crowned with a mat of bushy hair. He was excessively vain of his appearance, knew and attended to every one's business but his own, lived and flourished in an atmosphere of perpetual trouble, and could no more keep from making mischief than a duck could keep out of a neighboring pond. In a word, he was a sort of cross between Turvydrop and Paul Pry.

We now numbered about sixty enrolled names and, forming into squads, commenced drilling, with O'Mara, the melancholy man, and a fine looking young corporal of the name of Myers, of the regulars, and who was kindly permitted to act in this capacity by Captain Eagle, then on recruiting service in New York. There was also a Lieutenant Charles Ogle, formerly of the regular cavalry, a man of rare genius, and an efficient officer, who, with one Sergeant Ditcher, who had followed Nolan in his desperate charge at Balaclava, rendered us good service as instructors in cavalry tactics. Ladies came to witness our drill, friends offered their assistance, and things went on with every appear-

ance of a bright prospect for several nights. Then a dispute arose in regard to the kind of drill that should be adopted. The smart young corporal, who had become a favorite with us all, and O'Mara, were for adopting the American system. The big politician, although innocent of any and all systems of cavalry tactics, wanted to instruct them all. He could gallop a horse or swing a sabre with any of them, and thought that all these new-fangled notions about cavalry could but result in confusing the ideas of the men, as they had his. The melancholy man in black did not agree with any of them. He had brought his huge sabre with him, and would show them what he could do with it after drill. He would drill in his own way, and it was not his fault if they did not understand it. Lieutenant Ogle listened and looked on with silent contempt, while the dark-visaged little Major was willing to let them have it all their own way, and was so kindly disposed towards a neighboring bar, that he took occasion to pay his respects to it while others were disputing. The Balaclava man would obey orders, and drill according to the system we would be required to fight under. He was a poor man, did not look for a commission, and expected pay for what he did, for he had a family with open mouths, and but little to put in them. It was a soldier's duty to serve his country, and he could do that best by obeying orders. This was said in rebuke of the big politician, who had evidently given what little power of study he possessed to the regulations rather than to the tactics. He was one of those persons this war has produced too many of; who

believe in first taking care of themselves, and doing as little as they can for the country afterward. He would make himself master of the regulations, for only by that could a man know exactly what he was to get for his services. What was the use of a man exposing his life, unless he knew what he was to get for it. There was no romance in being killed for thirteen dollars a month, rations thrown in. In this manner the big politician would have entertained us every night until midnight, throwing himself back on his dignity, and frisking his fingers through his bushy hair. As for Ogle, he was a man of great good sense, and blessed with an even temper. When, therefore, he had shown his contempt for these disputes and the ignorance betrayed in them, he would sit quietly down to his pipe, write sonnets to his lady friends, of whom he had a number, or make merry over the names of those who presumed to know so much more about cavalry than he did.



## CHAPTER III.

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### BAD NEWS FROM WASHINGTON.

Our number had increased to about one hundred, of as good material as was ever got together. We had held our regular drills nightly, in the great hall, the outside grounds being occupied by Blenker, then organizing his 8th New York Volunteers, made up chiefly of Germans, who were making themselves happy over great heaps of bread and Bologna sausage.

Just as we had assembled for drill one night, it was announced that Colonel Clarke had returned from Washington, and would report what he had and had not done. The Colonel soon made his appearance in the body of the hall, and was received with three cheers. But it was not difficult to see by his manner, that what he had to say was not of an encouraging nature. Forming around him in a circle, he began by complimenting us on the progress we had made, and then gave us a detailed account of his experience in Washington. He had been received cordially by the President, who admitted that there would be a necessity for cavalry during the war. But he expressed alarm, when told that as many as twelve or fourteen new regiments would

be needed. They might be needed, but he did not believe the country would stand the expense. He was not skilled in the profession of arms, but he wanted to meet the expectations of the people, who would hold him responsible if he did not adopt the best and most efficient means of putting down the rebellion. But he had intrusted the organization of the army to General Scott and his Secretary of War. Colonel Clarke then proceeded to the War Department and obtained, after some delay, an interview with Mr. Cameron, who was then, unfortunately for the country, the ruling spirit of that institution. Mr. Cameron was too much of a politician to have any very deep sympathy or respect for a soldier educated to his profession. Indeed, so lively was his distrust of every officer who had been in the regular army, that he would, at times, treat with indifference, and even discourtesy, men whose services the country needed most. He was inclined, also, to underrate the merits of his own countrymen, and to give precedence to foreigners, who have since shown how little they were worth in this war. Mr. Cameron, as well as his successor, was unfortunate in falling into the popular error of his party that fighting battles and gaining victories was the business of politicians and reformers, and that if you gave a soldier an odd job now and then when his sword got rusty, it was merely to have him show how far he was behind the spirit of the times. All history teaches that the badly educated politician lives in continual fear of the overshadowing figure of the soldier. The good soldier may be a very useful thing to have at hand when there is immediate

danger, when his firm nerve is necessary to the politician's safety. But once the danger is over, the politician will mount his feathers and seek for a closet where he can keep the soldier until it suits his convenience to give him another job. The man who has sought and gained political power over a road both crooked and muddy, who never had a conscience to accuse him when selling the souls of some men and buying the votes of others, is not the man to appreciate the spirit of chivalry which rules in the heart and controls the acts of every true soldier. His thoughts are fettered, and his actions narrowed by the very means he was forced to use to gain his position, which he holds without finding any real favor in the hearts of the people, such being secured only where there is true worth. So it was with Mr. Secretary Cameron. But I have made a diversion from my subject.

The reception Colonel Clarke met from Mr. Secretary Cameron was not what he had a right to expect. He refused authority to raise the regiment, was undecided as to the necessity that would arise for cavalry; had his prejudices, and so had General Scott. General Scott, he said, had no faith in volunteer cavalry; it was a very expensive arm of the service; it would open an immense field for fraud and corruption. Nor was he certain that in such a wild, rugged, and wooded country as we should have to advance through during the war, cavalry in large bodies could be used to advantage. We could not always depend on the country we advanced into for forage, and the necessity of a supply large enough for the animals would so increase

the trains as not only to impede the movements of the army, but to quadruple the cost of transportation, and render it extremely dangerous to advance far beyond its depots. General Scott was of opinion, also, that this war would have to be fought chiefly by riflemen and artillery, and Mr. Cameron shared his opinion. He advised keeping up the organization, but could give no encouragement as to whether the regiment would be accepted or not. Colonel Clarke was sorry he had nothing better to report. As the Government had no need of his services, there was nothing for him to do but retire into private life. He retired, wishing us every prosperity in our undertaking. This news fell heavy upon our feelings, and several were ready to give up the enterprise, and would have done so, but for the appeals of the more sanguine. We needed a leader to lean upon and respect, and Colonel Clarke was the man. There were young hearts, full of fire and spirit, such as Bailey and Hidden, engaged in our enterprise. But to make it successful we needed a directing head—a man of experience, indomitable energy, and a will to overcome such obstacles as the Government was sure to throw in our way. Colonel Clarke saw, also, that Mr. Cameron's thoughts and feelings were wedded to Pennsylvania. If the Government should need cavalry, he (Mr. Cameron) said, why go so far as New York for it, when there was Pennsylvania nearer. Mr. Cameron had not then (and I doubt if his successor has now) discovered that there is some difference between the value to an army of a clever horse-thief and a skillful trooper. But if you compel

a man to practice law, who has been keeping a grocery-shop all his life, you must pay dearly for his blunders. No doubt Mr. Cameron was sincere when he fixed his mind on Pennsylvania as opening the best field for expert troopers. Indeed, it must be borne in mind that the wants of the war had not then developed the fact that Mr. Cameron's favored State has sent more clever horse-thieves and less good troopers to the war than any other.

Our drill masters put their squads through a series of evolutions, and when the evening's work was over, a few friends joined Colonel Clarke and retired to Bigsby's, where good cheer was to be had and the spirits of man so elevated as to forget his misfortunes. Among the number was the big politician, who spread over the Colonel and took him immediately under his protection. Before we had half finished our first punch, he began entertaining us with an account of himself. He was a man of fortune, he would have us all know, had filled various positions of high trust, could show how he had reflected honor on them all, and was making great sacrifices in joining the army once more. He was sure the Colonel, who he knew from the high reputation he bore, as a statesman as well as a soldier, had been badly treated. He (the big politician) would see justice done him, if it cost half his fortune and any amount of time. He had influence enough at Washington, and, what was more, knew how to use it. There was not a Senator who would not be delighted to serve him, and his word was enough to secure his friends the position they wanted. The Colonel had but

to say the word, and he would proceed to Washington (at his own expense, for he was indebted to no man for a dollar,) and see that his new friend, whose acquaintance he had just had the honor to make, was not only made a Colonel, but a General. He had the power and could do it.

The Colonel listened quietly to what the speaker had to say, and, being a sensible gentleman, set his promises down to the strength of the cups he had just drained.

## CHAPTER IV.

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### THE OPPOSITION TO CAVALRY AND GENERAL SCOTT.

It may not be out of place here to say a few words on a subject which has been brought before the public in various ways, and is of vital importance to the army and the nation. The charge of opposition to the use of cavalry when the war began, has been several times brought against General Scott. And the continued demand for more mounted troops that has been made by the press, in many cases prompted by interested persons, has been used to show that his opinions respecting the usefulness of a large cavalry force, were wrong. I have good reasons for saying that General Scott's opinions on this subject, when the war began, and at the present time, are very imperfectly understood outside of the War Department. I have reason to believe, also, that General Scott's name was improperly used, in connection with this subject, by the then Secretary of War, to cover his own short-sightedness. The politician's military horizon was at that time very contracted and indistinct. General Scott rose above it, and saw over it. If his advice had been properly acted on, and his plans not interfered with

and opposed by presumptuous men, the country would have been saved not only much blood and treasure, but many a disgraceful defeat at the hands of an inferior enemy. On the question of cavalry, General Scott was too good a soldier and too far-sighted a man, not to foresee that in advancing through a country possessing the peculiar features of Virginia and Tennessee, cavalry, or in other words, mounted troops, would be needed in various ways. To make quick movements, to take and hold the gaps of mountains before the enemy could reach them, was the business of cavalry. To act as videttes, to scout, to reconnoitre, to feel the enemy's positions, to make diversions and raids, to operate on flanks and harass the enemy's rear when in retreat, were duties expected of cavalry. To do escort duty, and protect supply and other trains through a country where the rear of an advancing army was continually exposed to the operations of guerrillas and small bands of the enemy, cavalry was indispensable. But General Scott knew that to perform these services well and effectively, the cavalry would require to be well organized, well officered, and thoroughly drilled. He knew that without these, cavalry, or what is called cavalry, must sooner or later become nothing more than a terrible drain on the nation's resources, and a perplexing incumbrance to its armies. The duties performed by cavalry were more hazardous and laborious than those expected of infantry or artillery. It should be, and was, in European countries, regarded as a superior arm of the service, better paid and better equipped. Its officers and men should possess a higher standard



of nerve and intelligence than either the infantry or artillery, to make it worthy of its name. And, too, a trooper without natural love for his horse, and a proper desire to see that he was well cared for, would be little more than an animal killer—a sorry expense to any government.

General Scott knew also what was the character of our people for rushing from one extreme to another, and that the influence of this great error in our national character, was soon to make itself felt dangerously on the Government. No man knew better than he did the true value to the nation of a well organized force of any kind. What he feared was the confusion and corruption which must result from every politician of influence having a military plan of his own, and impatient to force that plan on the Government. Nor did he fail to foresee that a Secretary of War, whose business it had been to practice law in a country village, who was indeed innocent of any military experience, must fall into the errors of such military men as he was likely to call in as private instructors, and that the result of this would be a conflict of authority disastrous to the nation's best interests.

If, then, General Scott had prejudices on the subject of cavalry when the war began, they were directed against the abuses to which it would be liable, not the uses to which it might be put. And if the experience of two years has taught us anything in the art of war, it has also taught us that General Scott was as correct in his opinions respecting cavalry, as he was in the number of men it would require to carry on the war

successfully, and make it of short duration. In no other branch of the service has there been so much fraud, so much corruption, so much utter worthlessness. Colonels' commissions were given, and men authorized to raise regiments of cavalry who had never mounted a horse; who were physically, as well as mentally, unfit to be soldiers. The conduct of a colonel stamps itself on the character of a regiment, especially the officers. And you cannot have good men, unless a colonel shows by his own character that he is fit to properly shape their conduct while in an enemy's country. The Government made cavalry colonels of some men who were as unfit to be at the head of a regiment as a gambler would be to preside over a prayer meeting. Such a position should be, and used to be, the reward of merit, for it is one of great importance in our army. The events of the war have shown that too many of these positions were bestowed on political favorites.

Without experience, no heart in the war, or a thought above what could be made out of the positions thus improperly bestowed upon them, it is safe to say that these men have not only been a great drawback, but brought disgrace upon the service. Officers of the regular cavalry were educated and honorable gentlemen; but the spirit that ruled among them does not seem to have descended to the volunteer. The Government is to blame for this, since the remedy is in its own hands, but it fails to apply it. Once armed with authority to raise a regiment, these men go to work picking up whatever sort of material they can find, regardless of its fitness or anything else but numbers.

Numbers are what they want, and when they get their regiment full, probably not more than one hundred and fifty or two hundred of its men are fit for or will ever make respectable troopers. This is particularly the case with some of the last regiments raised in Pennsylvania and New York. No one can have been with our cavalry long, and observed carefully the material of which these regiments are made up, without being struck with their great inferiority, mentally and physically, when compared with either the infantry or artillery. Strange, and almost unaccountable as it may seem, I have noticed that an incompetent colonel was sure to want his regiment officered by men who knew no more than he did. This invariably resulted in exhausting quarrels between him and his officers, and such quarrels have a very damaging effect on the discipline of the men. I have known regiments of cavalry to lay for a year useless in the outskirts of Washington, the officers spending most of their time in the city or, for want of something better to do, quarrelling among themselves, the men demoralized with dissipation, and finally the regiment, which had cost the Government so much to organize and support, dwindle away, until the amount paid to officers became greater than that paid to the men. It used to be the fashion for officers who wanted to get rid of an incompetent and useless colonel or major, to join in signing a petition asking the President to make him a brigadier general. But even that clever expedient seems to have lost its virtue, since Mr. Lincoln has not been taken in by it for some time past. I have known not less than a dozen colonels of cavalry,

loitering about the streets and hotels of Washington for weeks and months, not one of whom gave the slightest thought to his men ; and all drawing pay for services they were incompetent to perform. It is not difficult to understand what sort of discipline must rule in a regiment commanded by one of these men, and how little use it must be to the service.

It is not at all times pleasant to tell the truth ; but the sooner it is told of this arm of the service, the better for the nation. We have now upwards of two hundred and twenty regiments of cavalry in the service of the United States. These are exclusive of a few independent companies. Many of these regiments are very much reduced in men ; some of them not mustering for duty more than enough to make three full companies. And yet many of these mere skeleton regiments are still attended with a full complement of officers, all drawing full pay, while other expenses are going on in little less ratio than when the regiment was full. Some of these regiments have been left to the command of captains, while their incompetent colonels and majors were content to play ornament on the staff of some friendly General. Now, when it is considered that to organize, mount, equip, and put a cavalry regiment into the field, it costs the nation between five and six hundred thousand dollars, and between two hundred and fifty and three hundred thousand for every succeeding year it is kept in the service, the enormous cost of this branch of the service can be estimated at a glance. Nor can the necessity of keeping so costly an arm of the service properly officered and actively

employed, be urged too strongly on the Government. The politician tells us every day that it is not wise to study economy while the very existence of the nation is threatened. But a nation with so strong a foundation as ours has got in the patriotism of the people, will find better protection and a safer refuge for its honor in the hands of those who study economy and know how to properly apply it for the benefit of all, and at all times. Economy has no virtues during peace that cannot be applied in war. And every good man whose voice and acts form the administrative power of a nation should exert himself in its influence.

It might be asked what really the cavalry had done for which it could claim credit corresponding to its numbers and cost to the nation. Grierson, Straight, Pleasanton, and a few others, have given some proof of what might be done with a properly organized and officered force of cavalry. But the west has been more fortunate than the east, as well in the service performed by its cavalry, as the skill and dash of the officers who commanded it. There is, indeed, as much difference between the cavalry in these two sections of the country, as there is between the 8th Illinois and the 8th Pennsylvania regiments, a comparison every officer that knows anything of the cavalry attached to the army of the Potomac will understand. In order to be concise, I will limit what I have to say on this subject to what our cavalry has done in Virginia.

On several occasions I could name, the country has been sent into a fit of joy by the newspapers giving glowing accounts of some remarkable raid our cavalry

had made into the enemy's country. Even the picture papers, not to be wanting in enterprise, have astonished the younger members of our family with savage looking troopers, mounted on fierce war studs, dashing at terrible speed at the head of malicious columns into the enemy's country. But when we sift these glowing accounts down, and get at the real truth, we find it an affair so tame as to reflect but little credit on us. McClellan had but little confidence in our volunteer cavalry, and rarely used it. In the winter of 1861-62, he was afraid to send it out, knowing that if he did, it would be "gobbled up" by the enemy. On several occasions on the Peninsula, it was the means of throwing the infantry into confusion, and doing serious harm.

The officer whose name has been most prominently before the public in connection with cavalry movements in Virginia, is General Stoneman. But the most ardent admirers of that gallant officer find their energies taxed when invited to show the fruit of his labor. Few will contend that he improved its organization during the winter of 1861-2. He commanded a "flying column" up the Peninsula during the campaign under McClellan. Will any one tell me what he did from the day he left Williamsburg until he reached Mechanicsville on the Chickahominy, beyond keeping a respectful distance between his own front and the enemy's rear? He certainly did not hurry the movements of Johnson, who retreated up without leaving a sick soldier or a broken wagon behind. When Jeb Stuart made his celebrated raid round our army at Cold Harbor, and destroyed our trains at Tunstill's Station, Gen-

eral Stoneman was quietly resting near Meadow Bridge. It is true we sent Phillip St. George Cook in pursuit of his bold son-in-law. But that distinguished officer was careful to sail on the same circle, and in that way gave his son-in-law the advantage of a respectable start. In truth, it would not do to attempt to cut off so bold a trooper as Stuart, and Phillip St. George had a very natural and, perhaps, commendable aversion to being captured by his own son-in-law, and he a rebel. What the cavalry did during the seven days' battles before Richmond, is too well known to the country to need a word from me. In many instances it was in inextricable confusion, and retarded, rather than assisted our movements. Colonel Averill succeeded General Stoneman, and received the appointment of Brigadier General. As colonel of the 3d Pennsylvania volunteers, this officer won great credit for the spirit and discipline he infused into that regiment. But at the head of the cavalry force he seems to have lost his capacity to successfully command. His subordinate commanders never had confidence in his ability to handle a large force, and the fights he was engaged in never resulted in anything substantial.

When the truth comes to be told, and the true history written of these cavalry fights along the fords of the Rappahannock and Rapidan, and of which so much has been claimed by the press, the real results will show but little to our credit. The luckless Pope, in his memorable advance backwards on Washington, his legions as disordered as his own mind was bewildered, took the opportunity to tell some severe truths of his

cavalry. Some of it ran his infantry down in its haste to be first into Alexandria. Had that unfortunate General confined his strictures to his worthless troopers, the country would to-day have shared its sympathy with him, and he would, indeed, stand better before it.

It is now December, 1863, and the question may be asked—what is the condition of our cavalry in Virginia to-day? What benefit are we deriving from it in comparison to the enormous drain it is making upon the Treasury? General Stoneman, with the rank, pay, and emoluments of a Major General, has retired from active duty in the field, and presides over a cumbrous and costly “Cavalry Bureau” at Washington, established without authority of law, a thing unknown among the acts of Congress, an expensive fancy of that child of magnificent fancies—the present Secretary of War. The duties of this bureau are such as might be performed by any capable captain or lieutenant. General Stoneman being a Major General, must have things conforming to his dignity, and hence must have a staff, though the nation suffer. There is attached to this “Cavalry Bureau,” an expensive camp, for receiving and remounting dismounted troopers. It is noticed that since the organization of this camp, the number of dismounted cavalry men has alarmingly increased. The utility of this camp, as well as the influence it has on the service, has been questioned by some of our most experienced cavalry officers. Many of them regard it as nothing less than a premium held out to worthless troopers to break down their horses and get away from service and into Washington. It is very well known,



too, that regiments and parts of regiments sent into this camp to be remounted and re-equipped have, after long delay, returned to the field scarcely improved in their condition. Whether this expensive bureau and extensive camp will work any improvement in the efficiency of our cavalry, remains to be seen.

General Pleasanton, who really did some good fighting with his cavalry, and has some claim on the gratitude of the people, has to-day nothing more than a nominal command in the field. He is powerless even to organize and give proper rank to his own staff. He knows what cavalry ought to be, and feels that he could improve its condition, if the Government would but give him the power to act. But when politicians control, he finds it impossible to be anything more than their instrument. Disgusted at the position he holds and does not hold; disheartened at the condition of the force nominally under his command, we have almost ceased to hear of his name. Gregg, Buford, Custer, and Kilpatrick, officers who have shown what they could do with cavalry if they had the power to perform, are so chained down by orders, that their dash and bravery is lost to the nation. We have now some thirty-five regiments and parts of regiments attached to the army of the Potomac. The country may naturally ask how it is that with so large and expensive a force, Moseby, with a mere troop cuts in and out through our lines, whenever and wherever he pleases, destroys trains and Government property in our rear, and carries off his plunder and prisoners unmolested? What are our thirty-five regiments of cavalry doing

while Moseby and his troop play such pranks in our rear? Our Generals know the map of his operations. That they do not entrap him argues something wrong, and the common sense of the country knows where to fix it.

If we turn to the valley of the Shenandoah, so fruitful of disgraces to our arms from the beginning of the war up to the present time, and all for want of proper generalship, the condition of our cavalry will be found most deplorable. In an angle formed by Harper's Ferry, Martinsburg, and Winchester, there are some nine regiments of cavalry, or rather what are called cavalry, most of them wasting away in useless inactivity. The cowardly part performed by some of these regiments (especially those from Pennsylvania,) in running away from the enemy, is too well known to the country. The officers seem to have no confidence in their men; the men no confidence in their officers. It has been a question with many which was the worst cowards. To send them out on an expedition was to see them scamper back at the very shadow of Imboden, in disgraceful disorder. Their condition has been little better than that of a confused mob, made more useless by being mounted. Nor has the discipline and efficiency of some of these regiments improved in the slightest, though they have been nearly two years in the service. This would not be so if the Government did its duty and saw that these worthless officers were removed, and proper ones put in their places. Now it is well known that these nine regiments of cavalry, with their immense expense to the country, are kept at

bay by the mere shadow of Imboden and his men. Any one who knows anything of Imboden and his followers can attest to their being made up of the most cowardly and characterless vagabonds the confederates have sent out to disgrace a country and damage a cause. They have always been ready to run at any show of courage, and have never dared to meet the first New York cavalry in a fair fight. In truth, too, it is not adding much to our credit to say that Imboden and his men might have been captured or driven beyond hearing long since, but for the unwillingness of our Generals to give the order. At one time Imboden and his command, with its train, was within the very grasp of the first New York cavalry, the men of which were impatient to make the charge and capture it, as seen quietly moving away before their eyes. But the General in command, an eye-witness to the prize it required only an effort to secure, thought the risk too great to assume the responsibility without orders from Washington. He withdrew his forces and left Imboden to seek a peaceful asylum in the mountains. I have more than once suspected our generals commanding in the valley of having a peculiar love for Imboden and his followers, whose shadows served them to prolong the pleasures and pay incident to high command.

To say our cavalry was never in a worse condition, more disorganized and helpless than it is now, is only saying what is known in the army to be the truth. Is it not then the very extreme of folly to put the country to the expense of raising new regiments that can be of no earthly use to the service for at least a year, when

we have so many in the field that should be at once dismounted and made to perform duty as infantry? What we need is a reorganization and consolidation of the regiments already in the field. Permanent command should be given to some officer of known ability, with power to purge the service of its worthless officers and men, as well as to hold every colonel to a strict responsibility for the discipline and efficiency of his regiment. Military men well know that one regiment of good cavalry, well officered and well handled, will do more actual service than ten poor ones. And this is what Congress should understand, and act upon, for the benefit of the country as well as the honor of the service.

## CHAPTER V.

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### DIFFICULTIES TO BE OVERCOME.

Early May had passed, the nation's hopes and fears had been relieved somewhat by the prompt action of the people, and the middle of the month was come. And yet we had received no encouragement from Washington. The Government was still undecided as to whether cavalry would be needed in this war, and Mr. Cameron, without any convictions of his own on the subject, had enough to do assigning sutlerships and giving places of high trust to his small political friends. We had worked manfully to keep the organization together, but this repeated indifference to our claims at Washington brought a feeling of discouragement on us all. We were without a recognized head ; and how to raise funds to relieve our fast increasing necessities was a question that began to tax all the ingenuity we possessed. Begging was in fashion just then, and men (Germans especially) in all sorts of uniforms, were going from door to door soliciting of generous citizens money to aid in raising some real or imaginary regiment. This business was carried to such an extreme

that it assumed a degrading character, and those engaged in it were not the men to make good soldiers. Large sums of money were collected in this manner. And it is safe to say that a large portion of it went into the pockets of worthless officers, and was never accounted for to the men for whom the donors intended it.

We were not inclined to adopt this rule, so generally in practice, of raising the ways and means ; first, because, with the single exception of the big politician, we were none of us skilled in the art of begging ; and second, to be dependent on charity for the means of raising a regiment the Government must ultimately need, seemed mean and despicable. The Union Defense Committee was just then in the height of its power, and had taken a new saint into its circle. This new saint was no less a person than Fernando Wood, who had promised to be as good a Christian as any of them, and never again to play the political or any other kind of a sinner. He was now distributing the gentle influences of his love and patriotism over the whole committee, upon whose generosity he had made so deep an impression as to secure a vote granting him sixty-seven thousand dollars, or thereabouts, " to assist " in raising the Mozart regiment. Tammany had raised a regiment ; why should not Mozart display its patriotism in a similar manner ? And then the famous Union Saving Committee, which really did much good, and, with a little practical knowledge of military matters, might have done much more, had a strange partiality for giving money with a lavish hand to regiments raised through political influences. It had no money

to give us just then. We were not up to the political standard received by the committee. Mr. Wood had promised henceforth to walk according to the new creed provided for all good men and patriots. It would indeed be withholding justice from this highly honorable gentleman and straightforward politician, not to say that he conducted himself as a truly good Christian should, during his probation at the board. If he did not return to his seat after he had secured the object of his heart's desire, it was not because he had failed to impress the more pious members of the committee with the great depth and value of his patriotism.

It has been charged, and very unjustly I think, that Mr. Wood had selfish motives in thus setting up for a political saint; that his regiment was raised, not so much to put down the rebellion, as to keep life in a political enterprise he had invested capital in and was afraid would be swept into the dead sea of the past. But it must be remembered that all great and good men have, in all ages, been charged with selfishness, and I see no good reason why Mr. Wood should not be added to the long list of worthy persons who have been martyrs to their honest intentions, rather than heroes to their ambition. I knew something of this Mozart regiment when it was on the Peninsula, where it did some good service. Strange to say, the officers all seemed to repudiate their great benefactor, against whom several of them pronounced maledictions I would protest against their writing on my tombstone. This I charged to the ingratitude common among mankind, and not to any want of integrity shown by Mr. Wood

when he squared his account current with the regiment. But as Mr. Wood will not thank me for writing either his political or military history, and fearing my labor of love may be lost on the reader, I will return to the Union Defense Committee.

I have said we got no money of this committee. We did. After several applications to other members, General Dix generously came forward in our behalf, and procured for us the sum of five hundred dollars. Small as this sum was, considering the magnitude of our enterprise, and the obligations we had already incurred, it came like a fresh gleam of sunlight through dark and discouraging clouds, cheering our spirits and giving new life to our energies. The committee had, perhaps, good reasons for not giving us more. Some of its members told us what had become a stale story. It was not certain that cavalry would be called for. The authorities at Washington had advised raising infantry and artillery for immediate use. And cavalry regiments were so expensive, volunteer cavalry could not be depended on, and the country we had to operate in was not suited to the maneuvering of mounted troops. Such were the objections we had to overcome and work against.

But we had lost O'Mara, one of our best spirits. Frank, outspoken, manly in his every act, and with as true a heart as ever beat in a brave Irishman, he had served his country faithfully in the field when his superiors had turned traitors. Like a good patriot, he was again impatient to show his strength in doing battle for her cause. He had given us his services



willingly, and without remuneration, and his prompt, soldier-like bearing had endeared him to us all. Being doubtful of our success, he was offered and accepted a commission in the Tammany regiment, with which, as I have said before, he distinguished himself for great coolness and bravery.\*

Our group of leading spirits, as assembled of a morning in the little office at Palace Garden, to talk over the affairs of the nation and our own troubles, would have formed a fine subject for the pencil of Eastman Johnson. There was the meditative Stearns, his bright bald head, and his kindly face—never out of temper, and ready to accept disappointment without a sigh—to look at the bright side of everything, and never say give up while there was a hope. Harkins, who had played on many a stage, was ready now to entertain us with his amusing stories, his quaint humor, and his inspiring laugh. Active and impulsive, he would make various incursions into Jersey, recount the wonderful progress our regiment was making to his friends there, and come away with a number of their names on his roll. And these pleasant adventures after recruits he would recount to us in the morning, in his amusing style. There, too, was Bailey, whom we had all come to love, for his cool *nonchalance*, his activity, and his genial qualities, and his readiness to invite us all to the *Woodbine*, over the way, where he would spend his last dollar for what is known among soldiers as “brotherly love,” to keep the spirits up. And there was

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\* He afterwards commanded a western regiment, and fell like a hero, leading it on at the battle of Chattanooga.

Leavett, (the indomitable Tom,) never behind any man when there was work to be done. The handsome Harry Hidden, restless, impatient to get to the field, so prim in his attire, his black, piercing eyes warm with intelligence, and a curl of manly contempt on his lips for those who were desponding and ready to give up the enterprise in despair. Fancy this group forming a half circle, with the soldierly Ogle (well known in the regular army) for a central figure, and you have one of as companionable and genial spirits as ever sat together discoursing their future prospects in the field. Nor must I forget to mention a group that usually assembled outside and held their deliberations on the pavement. This was composed of the big politician, whom the wits inside had begun to use as a fit subject for their jokes, and whose wonderful stories of himself had ceased to have effect, except on the mind of some new recruit. The melancholy man in black, who had taught cavalry tactics over the border, and was always in a desponding mood, was sure we never could raise the regiment, solely because we did not follow his advice. Between the big politician and the melancholy man there sprang up a fellow feeling which it was difficult either to understand or appreciate, since they were opposites mentally and physically. The one had a big sabre, and wore long, square-toed boots ; the other had been a hero in the Mexican war. The little, dark visaged Major of Venezuelan fame, fraternized with this outside group, and indeed gave light and shade, if not picturesqueness to it. He was ready always to join the big politician over his cups ; but would never agree

with him on a question of arms. And he would dispute for an hour with the melancholy man over horse-flesh, and his skill in the use of the sabre. I noticed that all three of these distinguished officers were much more inclined to waste time in disputes on their own skill than to engage in the more urgent business of bringing in recruits. The best recruiting officers were those who were freest from self-laudation.

Hidden would attend of a morning to the recruits, inspire them with confidence as to our success, and whisper such words of encouragement in their ears as would make them feel impatient to be in the field. If the recruit were an old soldier, he was sure to want a dollar or two. He must drink our health; he must have success to the regiment in a square drink or two with a comrade who had served with him during some war in Europe. If there were a few shillings left, he would use it in first wetting the comrade's eye, and then fastening him on the rolls. In this way the "old soldiers" would frequently empty Harry's pockets, for he had a kind heart and could not resist the appeal of a soldier. It must be remembered, also, that at that day men were not bought to serve their country with corrupting bounties.

The question of how to get a colonel to act with us either temporarily or permanently, was now troubling us more than any other. Bailey had been up to West Point to see Bayard, then our instructor at the academy. Bayard was eager to get into the field, but could not then get the necessary leave of absence from the regular army to enable him to join the volunteers. Our

effort did not succeed. The big politician offered to spend half his immense fortune to get us the right sort of a colonel, or, to accommodate matters, he would take the position himself. But this kind offer was unanimously objected to. In truth, instead of the big politician showing us the color of his wealth, no sooner had we got possession of the fund appropriated by the Union Defense Committee, than he began to have serious designs upon it. There was this must be done, and it would take at least fifty dollars to do it. There was that must be done, or we could never get on ; and it would require sixty dollars to do it. One hundred and fifty would be required to do something else equally important. I noticed that the politician had a queer way of accounting for these sums which he generally got, and that was by assuring us upon his honor that they had been properly expended.

Major Merrill, formerly of the regular cavalry, was in the successful practice of law in Wall street. He was an officer of good reputation, had seen considerable service, and, we had been told, was anxious to again give his services to his country. A deputation was at once organized to wait upon him and tender him the command of the regiment. He received the deputation kindly, offered to render us any service within his power ; but, to our disappointment and chagrin, produced proof that he had already offered his services to the Government, in her hour of trial, and requested authority to raise a regiment of cavalry. His offer had been declined, peremptorily, by Mr. Cameron. He did not know why. It might be because he had

some experience, and knew something of cavalry, which the Secretary of War regarded as dangerous to the rule he had set up for the army about to be organized. He, however, offered to serve us to the extent of his power, joined us, gave us his advice, presided over our deliberations during evenings, and assisted us to make a temporary organization.

And now the time had come to make a temporary organization and elect officers to serve nominally. There was a great stir at headquarters one night, and all those ambitious to serve their country as captains and lieutenants of cavalry, were hard at work soliciting influence and votes. Foremost among the most active workers was the big politician, who was an adept at wire-pulling, and had fixed his very soul on the quartermastership, a position then considered to be worth an immense prospective fortune to any man with limited scruples as to what the Government lost and a private gentleman made. But as this appointment was within the gift of the colonel, after the regiment should be permanently organized, and not to be voted for at this time, the politician resolved to be content for the present with the captaincy of company A. When drill was over "the men," or rather those who were considered the rank and file, went to their homes; while those who considered themselves the flower of the organization proceeded up into the gallery, and seated themselves at a long table, Major Merrill taking the head. The major, before proceeding to the business which he had been called to preside over, made us a neat little speech, full of good advice and sound com-

mon sense. He also expressed his surprise that while the rebels were moving to action as if touched by one spring, our Government should evince a disposition to throw obstacles in the way of men whose energy and patriotism were producing what it would most need. Nor could he understand why the War Department should be so averse to men who had seen service in the regular army. Three cheers were given for the major, and we went into the business of voting. The big politician, to his own surprise, was declared elected captain of company A. Rising with great gravity of manner, he began frisking his fingers through his bushy hair and pondering over his sentences, for it would not do to be thus honored without returning thanks for it. The speaker, after hesitating for some time, and acting as if his mind were in pursuit of thoughts, which afforded Harkins an excellent opportunity for a display of wit, began by saying he had made speeches enough but was never good at the beginning. His language was evidently refractory, for his words would insist on coming out backwards, and sticking half way at that. What he intended to say, but did not, was that such a distinguished honor was intended, he feared, for some one else. He had never sought positions of high trust, and if he accepted them it was only because he was conscious of having ability enough to fill them satisfactorily. A man must not be a martyr to his modesty when his country was in danger ; and if he had not already, he would in good time, prove to us that patriotism alone found him in our ranks. Harkins, Stearns, Battersby, and the little dark-visaged major were also

elected captains. Others were content to be first lieutenants, and some went away disappointed. However, we were organized into working parties, and that was something. When the evening's work was over we retired to the Woodbine over the way, and joined hands over a social glass.

## CHAPTER VI.

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### PRESSING NECESSITIES.

The middle of May and still working without authority. McDowell was in command of the troops around Washington, and the country was hung in suspense with daily rumors of terrible things the rebels were doing out west and among the mountains of Virginia. Regiments of volunteers were being quickly formed in New York and sent to aid the Government. At that time true patriotism was aroused, and wives parted freely with husbands who went to the war, and sisters rebuked brothers inclined to stay at home. It was popular to be a soldier then; even a poetic inspiration seemed to have seized on the people, and the man had some courage who dared stem the rush to arms. These things, however, did but increase our anxieties and heighten the gloom that hung over our prospects. Other regiments were fitting up and going off. We could not get ours accepted. Our expenses for rent had increased alarmingly; and our kind and forbearing landlord needed what we had not got in the exchequer to give him. The man who had printed the big, flaming



posters, with the fierce looking trooper at a charge, would look in to say he wanted a trifle, if it would not inconvenience us. The gray-bearded man, who had an advertising bill, and wanted to join us because he hated the south and her "niggers," assured us his employers needed money or he would not have troubled us. Rent for recruiting stations outside was accumulating, and the genius of Bailey was sorely taxed for assurances that they (the importuning landlords) would be paid at a future day. To have no money, and yet be able to send a creditor away encouraged, is a merit not possessed by every gentleman. The poor recruits, too, had mouths and needed something to put in them. They perhaps had little children looking to them for bread. Recruiting officers had to be sent into the country to stir up the patriotism of the people, and bring in the ambitious youth impatient to swing a sabre. Money must be provided for their transportation and other expenses. We needed five thousand where we had only five hundred dollars. It was not pleasant to give our time and be compelled to run in debt to serve the Government.

Then we had to stop our drills of an evening. Blenker's regiment of Teutons had spread over the large hall, piled its sides with their blankets and mattresses, and stacked arms in its centre. They used it for a camp at night and a banqueting hall by day, with Bologna sausage and foaming lager for the feast. Germany was just at that time in high feather; in high feather with the authorities at Washington; in high feather with our politicians; in high feather with themselves as

soldiers superior to all others. The Government was inclined to give Germany all she demanded ; and there was little connected with the army that she did not demand. Of course we yielded to Germany ; and taking our departure from Palace Garden, located next at Independence Hall, a narrow little loft over a livery stable on Seventh avenue. Things did not prosper well with us here, recruits began to get dissatisfied and to drop off, and there was a fair prospect that we would have to give up the enterprise and ask our creditors to forgive us our sins. It was, however, proposed to send another delegation to Washington to get authority for Major Merrill to raise the regiment and take command. It was thought that the little dark-visaged major, who assured us he had an intimate acquaintance with all the high military dignitaries at the capital, might work a favorable result with Mr. Cameron. He did indeed seem the sort of man Mr. Cameron had a weakness for. If, too, the major failed to make an impression by his wonderful stories of what he had done in war, he was sure to effect his purpose with a few exhibitions of what he could do with the sabre.

Well, the major and myself were chosen a delegation of two, and started for Washington of a Saturday afternoon. It was evident, however, that the major regarded the expedition as an affair of pleasure, and was inclined to make the most of it. We had not gone far when he wanted to see a friend, and left the train for the night. On the following day, (Sunday) the major joined me at the Continental Hotel, in a most happy state of mind. He had on a cavalry jacket, was armed

with a sabre, and had been enjoying his cups with a few friends of a military turn, whom he had chanced to meet on the road. The wonders of Philadelphia must be seen before the major could think of proceeding to Washington to do business with high military authorities. There was Fairmount, and other attractive locations to be seen, and the major rolled away in his carriage to astonish people not in uniform. It was late in the evening when he returned, feeling very happy, and without a care as to how the war went. We started for Perryville in the eleven o'clock train, the major armed with a big black bottle, the contents of which we would need, he said, for the night was wet and stormy. But he soon went into a deep sleep, from which he did not wake until we reached Perryville, then a place of some military importance. The road from Havre-de-Grace to Baltimore was destroyed, and some parts of Maryland were in a belligerent state. On alighting from the cars we were brought to a halt by the guard, two sturdy Germans, neither of whom could speak a word of English, or were inclined to be on very social terms with any of us. Indeed, they several times made feints to charge into our solid column, bringing the points of their bayonets into an uncomfortable proximity to our noses. At this halt we were kept for more than ten minutes, the rain pouring down, and sergeant of the guard No. 2, who was called for about every two minutes, seeming resolved not to be disturbed from his sound sleep. Not a few imprecations were bestowed upon the head of sergeant of the guard No. 2, when he made his appearance; and a few were heard to very emphatically

condemn the folly of any military order that went to restrict the progress of an American citizen.

Sergeant of the guard No. 2 gave the order to pass on. The German sentinels shouldered arms and resumed their pacing, and the throng of passengers rushed down the long and rickety wharf, lumbered with all sorts of boxes and bales, and on board a small, cranky steamboat that was to convey us down the Susquehanna to Annapolis. It would be difficult to imagine anything more disagreeable than this passage. The little boat was piled beyond her capacity with freight, and swarmed with a suspicious-looking class of passengers, a majority of whom had the seal of Israel on their faces, and were bound to the promised land just being opened for them by General Butler. There was no place to lay down, and sleep was a luxury not to be thought of. The mischievous employed the time circulating reports of captures just made by the rebels, of fights with our troops at the Relay House, of reverses to our arms at Harper's Ferry, and various other reports of an exciting nature, until the timid began to wish themselves back on the safe soil of Pennsylvania. Stories were told, too, of vessels captured down the river, burnt, their owners robbed, or made prisoners to the new government just started by Mr. Davis, and which Maryland was just then strongly inclined to coquette with. In this way the effect of the pitiless storm was relieved. Indeed, there were not a few simple enough to inquire of the captain if there was much danger of capture by some rebel craft lurking along the coast.

About two o'clock in the morning the little major made his appearance, creating quite a sensation among a throng of ill-featured persons in the after cabin, who regarded him with no small degree of curiosity, for he wore his kepi, his cavalry jacket, and a sabre nearly as long as himself. He began by lamenting the loss of his black bottle, and charged it to the Jews, whom he declared to be an unrighteous set of cowards, not one of whom dared to cross a sabre with him, or shoot at ten paces on the upper deck. Here the major drew his sabre and began flourishing it, to the intense alarm of all unarmed passengers, for he declared he would show us how they treated the Jews in Venezuela when he commanded the flower of her army. There were not a few inquiries as to who the major was, and a wag circulated it about that he was a distinguished French General, sent over by Napoleon to instruct us in the formation of our army. The more sensible set him down for a mad adventurer, out of a job, and a little tipsy. His expressions of hate for the Jews failing to restore his lost bottle, he began drawing a map of Venezuela on the deck, with the point of his sabre, and then pointed out to the astonished bystanders exactly where her army was posted during certain battles he had taken a prominent part in. In this way he would have kept the passengers entertained until daylight, but for a stalwart engineer, who picked him up in his arms and carried him to the pilot's bunk, where he slept soundly until we reached Annapolis.

Annapolis presented a busy scene just then ; wherever the eye turned it met some fresh proof of the restless

activity and indomitable energy of General Butler. The harbor was full of barges, steamboats, and other light draught vessels, some crowded with troops, others loaded with munitions of war, forage or subsistence. The thirteenth New York (Brooklyn) militia were stationed there, and as a proof of their industry and engineering skill, had built several extensive piers and storehouses, and laid the railroad track from the depot in the town down to and along the Government wharves. We arrived just in time to see the first train make its entrance into the grounds amidst the cheers of the troops. A great change had suddenly come over Annapolis; a change that might have been turned to great results in the future, had the people made their thoughts and actions conform to it. But they were moody and sullen, and seemed to regard with distrust, if not outspoken dislike, the busy scene that was being enacted inside of the Government grounds. A little after ten o'clock the train started for Washington, filled with a motley throng of passengers. General Butler and his staff accompanied us as far as the junction. He was on his way to the Relay House, to direct some military movements going on there. All along the road, at short intervals, were guards protecting the road, their rustic huts, made of boughs and underwood, presenting quite a picturesque appearance. The good Marylanders along the road were very uncertain in their loyalty. It was not safe, perhaps, to be open traitors, though slavery had fixed their sympathies with the south; and the question with many of them was, would patriotism be profitable? Not a few of the "most respectable" and

more wealthy among them would, under cover of darkness, have picked up a rail here and there, or destroyed a bridge, to show their contempt of the "Lincoln Government."

The storm had ceased, the day was warm and sunny, and it was one o'clock when we reached Washington, then transformed into a vast camp. War had already begun to write the history of its work on objects about the city. Armed with a passport from the Union Defense Committee, setting forth that I was a good and loyal citizen, I passed guards everywhere and gained ready admittance "within the lines." Pennsylvania avenue was thronged with men in uniform; soldiers lounged on the grass plats, and disorder and want of discipline were already working their evil effect. And, too, it seemed as if all the bad and characterless men of the country had gathered into the capital with a view of procuring prominent places in the army. The nation and its cause has since suffered because these men generally got what they demanded.

## CHAPTER. VII.

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### STRANGE SCENES IN THE CITY OF WASHINGTON.

But if the city was a great camp, it had indeed the appearance of being without a commander. Rhode Island troops had turned the south end of the Treasury building into a barracks, and some Baker who needed employment as a spy was daily discovering rebel plots to blow it up. These ridiculous reports, originating with bad men among ourselves, seriously disturbed the slumbers of certain aged ladies, and also weakened the nerves if not the knees of a weak-kneed Cabinet. Bad men out of business sought and found employment through the fears of those in high office. A French philosopher once told me that it had cost some nations more to arm their fears than to defend themselves against their foes. With what I saw around me I began to think there was some truth in what this savan had said. Some rulers so fear their friends that they lose half their strength when they undertake to fight their country's enemies. It looked to me at this moment as if fear was to lead us into many damaging errors. But of this I shall say more in a more appropriate place.



Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Massachusetts troops swarmed over the city; were quartered in stores and houses along the avenue, and made the very air echo with their merry voices, for war was a novelty then. The Patent Office shared with other buildings its spacious halls for the accommodation of troops. How little control the officers had over their men, what must have been the discipline and the spirit of recklessness that ruled among all, might have been read with pain on the defaced and disfigured walls of those noble buildings. Men who would have scrupulously protected their own property at home, and indeed blushed at the vandal who dared lay vile hands on the public buildings of any country, saw their men deface these noble monuments of our progress without a word of rebuke. And what, let me ask, could be expected of men in an enemy's country whose acts were to destroy rather than protect our own public buildings?

It was, however, in the Capitol of the nation that the finger of desecration had written its work in the boldest outlines. This building, so admired by men of taste of every nation, was turned into a garrison. The lower floor served as a storehouse, its costly tiles broken into crumbs, and the frescoed walls, blackened and defaced, frowning upon huge piles of beef and flour barrels. The second or main floor presented a still more sad and unsightly scene. A Brooklyn regiment, composed chiefly of Germans, were encamped here, and the men seemed to regard it their duty to deface or destroy whatever they came in contact with. The beau-

tiful corridors, on which art had exhausted itself in decoration, were wantonly defaced, and strewn with the litter of filthy mattresses. You could here see how soon war lets loose all the bad passions and makes man the most destructive of animals. You could see, also, how the soldier, once his spirit of destruction is aroused, does not stop to inquire whether the property he destroys belongs to friend or foe. If works of art in the Capitol of the nation found no respect at the hands of our soldiers, how little could we expect from them for property in an enemy's country?

In the new hall where our representatives assemble, there was being enacted when I entered a strange and grotesque scene. It would be doing injustice to this history did I not record it. In the Speaker's chair sat a grave but stalwart German, with the short thick neck and broad shoulders of an Hercules, a big bullet head, close cropped, a flat inexpressive face, and his brawny arms bared to the elbows. His only raiment was a shirt and trowsers, and no Speaker within my recollection has ever presented so giant-like a figure. Behind him bristled stacks of bright muskets. Accoutrements hung here and there from and disfigured the walls, while pistols and side-arms lay before him on the Speaker's desk. In front of this desk several of his comrades had gathered, having taken part in a very boisterous but good tempered debate. The man then addressing the chair, or rather he who sat in it with such clever mock gravity, was tall, lank of figure, and the features of his face would have done justice to Don Quixote. He spoke with great fluency, clear emphasis,

and fierce gesticulation. He spoke in the tongue of his fatherland, and I could not get from any one near me, so intent were they on listening, what the subject under debate was. The speaker was evidently a man of some humor, for every few minutes he would send his audience into a roar of laughter, and so disturb proper decorum that the man in the chair would rise and command order. It was clear they were burlesquing, perhaps imitating, scenes enacted by the country's legislature in the same place. The tall man was evidently a great favorite, for there was great cheering when he sat down, and not a few of his companions gathered about him offering bread and sausage, and indeed bestowing upon him various tokens of appreciation. A little frisky German, who had several times attempted to interrupt the tall man in the course of his speech, now rose and was greeted with cries I could understand to mean—put him out. He had a short, crooked nose, this little man, a tea-kettle shaped head, and was what is called bandy-legged. He reminded me of Foot when he rose in the Senate. He always wanted to be up, and nobody could keep him down. He was never happy in his seat, and when he was up he seldom had anything sensible to say.

The little frisky man began by frisking in and out among his comrades, making strange motions with his head and fingers at the man in the chair. The chair was not inclined to receive this without rebuke, and rising, in defense of its dignity, threatened to throw a Colt's revolver at the bulgy head of the peace disturber. At this the little man made several polite

bows, and would have put a question of privilege had not the chair summarily ruled him out of order. But he was resolved not to regard himself out of order, and turning to some one in a distant part of the house began ejaculating something I could not understand, and shaking his clenched fists in a paroxysm of passion. The chair now ordered him in arrest, and a file of three men bore him off to one of the committee rooms, then used as a guard-house. Several other things common to parliamentary usage were gone through, with considerable resemblance to the reality. But it was impossible to witness this strange scene without feelings of pain and sorrow. Some of the members' desks were broken to pieces ; others were rendered useless ; others were used by half-clad soldiers to rest their feet upon. Soldiers sat in the chairs of members, cleaning their muskets, or brushing up their belts. The gleam of bright muskets and bayonets shooting up through the body of the house, and resting against the frescoed walls, excited a recollection of Rome, when soldiers entered the Senate and murdered or drove out the Senators. The costly furniture, sofas, and settees, that stood along the rear of the hall were broken to fragments. A similar scene of destruction might have been seen in the galleries. And this work of wantonness, this vandalism of the nineteenth century, the officers who permitted it meriting the severest censure, the Germans now on duty charged as the work of the First New York Zouaves—a regiment made up of, I regret to say, firemen. My own opinion is that the Germans did quite as much, if not more than the Zouaves, to

produce this scene of wreck in the capital of the nation.

I went from the House of Representatives to the Senate chamber, of which we were all so proud. It was filled with soldiers ; its furniture was broken, its desks destroyed, the paintings on the walls bleared and defaced. Respect and reverence seemed gone, and the brutal conduct of men placed here to guard and protect, deserved the severest censure. The President's desk was used as a rack for fire-arms, and the broken sofas and chairs were piled in a promiscuous heap against the side walls. There was no need of turning the Senate Chamber into a camp. There was no need of desecrating the Halls of Congress, and turning the Capitol of the nation into a barracks. Its grounds afforded ample shelter for the troops, and if the enemy had contemplated an attack upon it the troops could have defended it as well from without as within. But the enemy, with all his crimes, and they are manifold, never seriously contemplated an attack on Washington. His policy when the war began was to act strictly on the defensive. When he changed that policy he well knew how strongly Washington had been fortified, and what an attempt to take it would cost him.

I must now return to the object of my mission. I had been three days in the city, and through the kindness of a friend in the War Department had succeeded in getting two interviews with Mr. Cameron. It seemed to me there was no man in the United States more to be pitied, since nearly all his time and atten-

tion was absorbed (or at least I thought it was) in giving sutlerships to old friends in Pennsylvania, and investing needy lawyers with authority to raise regiments. As to cavalry he was still uncertain about its usefulness in this war. He had consulted various writers, and was trying to make up his mind as to what cavalry had and had not done in other wars. He was not sure that cavalry added much to the real strength of an army. Young men would no doubt like to ride to the war at the country's expense ; but to open a great national riding school for the accommodation of these young gentlemen was a question requiring very serious consideration. At all events there was no need of going beyond Pennsylvania for cavalry. Pennsylvania was a great horse-growing State. Her people were honest, and most of them could ride. Her farmers, in many places, still went to mill mounted. It was clear that Mr. Cameron's faith in raising cavalry enough for the war was firmly fastened to Pennsylvania, while the innocence of his ideas respecting that arm of the service was worthy of the Duke of Newcastle, once England's Minister of War.

The Secretary saw another serious obstacle in the way, and no means of overcoming it. He regarded "the regulations" as his master ; and there was nothing in the regulations to warrant him in supplying horses to our volunteer cavalry. Every man must provide his own horse and equipments. For the use of the horse the Government would pay forty cents a day, with an equal amount for forage. Now, it is very easy to see how few men willing to enter the

cavalry service would have the means of providing their own horses and equipments. Such a system, if continued, would have been fatal to the organization of a volunteer cavalry. There were undoubtedly men enough ready to have stepped in and supplied the horses ; but few can fail to see how wide a field for the operations of speculators in bad horse-flesh it would have opened. General Meigs took a more intelligent view of this subject, and to him is due the credit of opening the eyes of the Government to the necessity of changing this system and mounting our volunteer cavalry at its own expense.

It was early June, and although Mr. Cameron could give us no encouragement as to whether the regiment would be accepted, he advised keeping up the organization, and trusting to what the further necessities of the war might produce. I had scarcely left the War Department, however, when I heard that the "Government" had made a colonel of Mr. Carl Schurz, and authorized him to raise a regiment of cavalry, to be composed chiefly of Germans, whose military skill the Government was at that time inclined to place a high price upon. Indeed, it may be added with truth, that the Government had at that time a strange and unaccountable weakness for German soldiers, and was quick to bestow its favors on such as applied for high commands. This may account for the readiness with which Mr. Schurz, a gentleman of fine literary tastes, obtained what had been refused experienced officers who had served in our regular cavalry. Events have since shown how much the Government had to learn before

it came to place a proper value on American courage and American talent.

I had been four days in Washington, and seen nothing of the little Major since our arrival. I began to be much concerned about him, for he had expressed to me great anxiety to get into the very heart of Virginia, and give the rebels a taste of his courage. He, however, confronted me in the afternoon, in the sitting room of Willards' hotel, very mellow, physically as well as mentally; and the story he related to me was very remarkable, as well in its manner of delivery as in its deliberate disregard of truth. "Bin troubled iver since we arrived," said the Major, with an unsafe motion of the body, "with ickups and tic-dol-rue. Had a d—l of a time, altogether. Regiment's no go. Government don't want it, won't accept it—no use for cavalry, no how. Cost the country too much, you know. Seen General Scott, renewed old acquaintance. Said he had not seen anybody he was so glad to see since the war. Gave me his chair and took another. Talked over Mexico. Took two cocktails with him, one before breakfast, t'other just after. Man of solid ideas, sir, and a soldier. Knows just the kind of men needed for this war. Appointed me to the command of the scouts—right off, to-morrow. You'll hear from me, old fellow. Man's curious: up David to-day, down David to-morrow. David's up to-day." The Major continued in this strange strain for several minutes, then oscillated into a chair, drew close to me, and continued in a whisper, "Got the whole plan of the war. So much for the old



general's confidence in me. Off into Virginia to morrow. Paid respects to President ; exchanged jokes with him ; told him he could rely on me when he wanted a friend. Bless you, sir, these big men all know me. Caleb Cushing (met him yesterday and tipped glasses) said, what can I do to serve you, Major ? say the word and I'll see you made a general. Seward invited me to dine with him, and wanted to know how long the war would last. Said he was sorry I could not dine with him, and laughed when I said the war would last a year. Cameron was studying the Regulations. Said I might be at better business than raising cavalry to ruin the nation. Couldn't see cavalry that wasn't raised in Pennsylvania, where people were honest." The Major rose from his chair, bid me good bye, and taking the arm of a companion, also under the influence of *tic-dol-rue*, they both went oscillating out of the room. This was the last I saw of the little Major, nor have I heard of him during the war.

## CHAPTER VIII.

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### THE WAY WE GOT A COLONEL.

When I returned to New York a great change had taken place in our affairs. Our headquarters had been removed back to Palace Garden, and the prospects of our organization were brighter than I had expected to find them. Mr. Carl Schurz, in addition to his commission as colonel of cavalry, had been appointed Minister to Spain. Not many years ago we were represented, or rather misrepresented, at that Court by a frisky Frenchman, who excited among Spaniards the remark that it was strange a people so intelligent as the Americans had to get foreigners to represent them abroad.

We were now to be represented at the Court of Madrid by a very talkative German, between whose countrymen and the Spaniards there never existed any very high respect. What sending a German to represent us at the Court of Madrid could do to heighten the respect of Spaniards for us, I leave such of my readers as have resided in Spain to form an opinion. Some persons have said Mr. Schurz could have been better provided for and made more useful at home. Certain it is he was in great tribulation, and for some time un-

decided whether to go into the field—a hero at the head of a regiment of troopers—or to proceed to Spain and enjoy the dignity of a four years' residence at Madrid. To be sure, he knew nothing of cavalry, although he had recently given himself to the study of books on the subject. And he had authorized Count Moltki, as fierce a looking trooper as ever swung sabre, to proceed to the formation of a German organization. The Count gathered about him several other gay troopers from fatherland, and, be it said to his credit, was not long in collecting a goodly number of Teutonic braves ready to take the field under his command.

Colonel Carl Schurz walked the streets of New York day after day, now fancying himself at the head of a regiment of troopers, making brilliant charges on the enemy's lines, and for his gallantry winning fame that would live and brighten in the history of the war; now fancying himself a Minister at Madrid, the companion of distinguished diplomatists and the sharer of Queen Isabella's smiles. The would-be trooper could not resist the attractions of Madrid. He decided to go to Spain. The question now was how to get rid of his commission as colonel, and also to escape the suspicion that he was afraid to take the field, for there was any number of swash-bucklers in the market at that time, and to be numbered among them was fatal to a gentleman with high diplomatic pretensions.

We, too, had got a colonel, a gentleman who claimed Ireland as his birthplace; was proud that he could claim her, but was just from Michigan, where he had for some years been engaged in the twin professions of

law and politics. In appearance one might have mistaken our new colonel for a village schoolmaster sometime out of a job. He was a man of middle stature, with a round pleasant face, and hair that hung far down over the collar of a shabby black dress coat. His neck was encased in a stiff satin stock such as New England clergymen used to wear twenty years ago. His vest was of well-worn black satin; a big cameo pin illuminated a dingy shirt bosom, his trousers were black and thready, and a pair of dilapidated morocco boots ornamented his feet. I had almost forgotten to mention a tall and somewhat damaged hat, which he wore jauntily on the top of his head, and a pair of heavy brass-bowed spectacles, that worked every few minutes to the tip of a blunt nose, and gave him a deaconish air. But our colonel was a man of rare genius, and not to be judged by his clothes. Indeed, I have no doubt he wore the latest and most approved style of dress known to the legal profession in Michigan. I must add also that he had fought, and gallantly, too, in our war with Mexico, where he was a captain of cavalry. He had charged side by side with the gallant Kearney, when with a mere troop of cavalry he (Kearney) drove the enemy in confusion over the causeway and up to the very gates of the city of Mexico. The brave Kearney lost his arm there. There, too, our colonel was wounded, and he showed you a paralyzed arm as the proof of his valor. He was ripe of those genial qualities which give strength to friendships between men, and are exceedingly valuable in camp. If he lacked quickness and decision, he could

sing you a good song, tell you a story of something pleasant in the past, enjoy a companion over his cups, yes, and he had a speech for you after dinner, and few could beat him at a rubber of whist.

Here was an excellent opportunity for Colonel Carl Schurz to get rid of the difficulty the War Department had fastened upon him. That astute diplomat and candidate for martial honors saw in McReynolds, for such was our colonel's name, a means of transferring his commission as colonel of cavalry, and proceeding on his way to Spain, where he could enjoy in peace the pleasures of a residence near the Court of Madrid. The big politician, too, thought this an excellent opportunity to display his talents, and taking both colonels under his shadow, seriously disturbed their peace of mind with his attentions. There was nothing he could not do for them, even if his influence had to be exerted over the Cabinet at Washington. There, he would assert, his patriotism was appreciated, though not a few of us knew he was at heart as arrant a rebel as could be found south of Culpepper. But so afraid was he that either colonel should suspect him of being anything less than a patriot, ready to shed his blood or spend his immense fortune for the cause of the Union, that it was difficult to get him to leave them, if only for an hour. Or, if he left one it was to appear before the other, his hat in his hand, making sundry obsequious bows. He always wanted to assure the Minister to Spain that he could serve him in various ways, and consider it an high honor to be afforded the opportunity. And so persistent were his

offers that Mr. Schurz began to regard himself as regularly besieged. He was much concerned, too, and spent many sleepless nights, lest he should not get the eagles soon enough on the shoulders of our colonel. Indeed, there was little business he did not manage to get himself mixed up in, to the serious injury and delay of whatever we undertook ; and yet he never for one hour attended to his own, which was to recruit for Company A, which he boasted of having the honor to command, though every man in it had long since set him down for a fool, and not to be served under for a day.

Various meetings were held, and after the exchange of several propositions it was agreed on the part of Carl Schurz, Minister to Spain and colonel of cavalry, on the one side, and our colonel, for himself, on the other : first, that the commission held by Mr. Schurz, with the authority it conferred to raise a regiment of cavalry, be transferred to our colonel ; second, that four companies of Germans were to be admitted a part of the regiment ; third, that they should elect officers of their own countrymen ; fourth, that the position of lieutenant colonel should be given to a German. This done, Mr. Schurz was free to proceed on his mission to Spain ; to seek civil and not military glory. This compromise, so quickly agreed upon and so satisfactory to Mr. Schurz, had to be sanctioned by the War Department before it became valid. A delegation must be sent to Washington ; money must be provided to pay its expenses. Here was a nice job for the big politician, whose fingers always had a remarkable itching for what little money we had in the treasury. This

remarkable delegation, to effect what could have been done in an hour by one man, consisted of our colonel, Captain Stearns, Captain Boyd, (who was raising a company for us in Philadelphia,) and the big politician, who was sure nothing could be done in Washington without him. This man must have three hundred and fifty dollars, at least, to pay the expenses, and as that was just the amount we had in the treasury, the contribution of a generous friend, there was not a shilling left to warm up the courage of a new recruit at the Woodbine. What earthly use the big politician could be in Washington not one of us could see. Seriously speaking, one might as well have sent our little bugler, as ill-begotten an item of flesh and blood as ever was born into this or any other world, and a melancholy illustration of all the vices known to human kind, though he boasted of having sounded his bugle from Maine to Mexico.

The War Department was inclined to regard Germans as superior to Americans for cavalry, and hesitated to ratify the agreement. The President, however, stepped in and put an end to the delay by ordering the regiment to be accepted, with Colonel McReynolds, and filled up with all speed. This done our delegation returned to New York, much elated with its success, the credit of which the big politician took entirely to himself. We now went on recruiting rapidly—the Germans for themselves, the Americans for themselves. And as we were in better spirits, we changed our headquarters to Disbrow's riding school, where many an

amusing scene in the history of our recruiting was enacted.

The Germans were a fine, soldierly looking set of men, especially their officers, and adapted themselves to circumstances better than the Americans. Most of them had seen military service in their own country, were familiar with the tactics, and, indeed, knew all the details of organizing much better than we did. Nor were they free from boasting of their superior military knowledge, and what they would do in battle when the time came. We were always giving ourselves much trouble as to who was to pay the subsistence bills we were incurring, for Congress had not yet passed the twenty million act for the reimbursement of such persons as had paid money for recruiting, subsisting, and organizing new regiments. The Germans gave themselves no such concern. Their officers enjoyed good dinners with an abundance of Rhine wine, and entertained their friends. With them lager was a potent recruiting sergeant, and there was no stint of it among the men, who fared sumptuously and also entertained their friends. A merrier or better natured set of fellows never bivouacked. They gave themselves no concern as to who would pay the bills, having great faith in the large generosity of the Government they were to fight for. And when they had eaten their credit out in one place they would quietly move to another, form the acquaintance of a new host, and enjoy his fare. In this way there came to be numerous confiding Germans, each with a bill for several hundred dollars, and anxious to get them paid without delay. The German



officers were polite gentlemen, who would put their importuning creditors on the rack and tell them not to get impatient. Our creditors were likewise uneasy, and had to be put off with the best kind of promises we could invent. But recruits came in rapidly, and our companies were filling up, some of them with sons of the first families in New York. The big politician was making a great deal of trouble for us outside, and had not recruited a man for his company, which was being filled up through the efforts of Ogle, Bailey, and others. The tall melancholy man in black, too, had taken it into his head to feel aggrieved, and instead of recruiting his company (B) had placed himself under the shadow of the big politician; and both went about like bears in tribulation, creating bad feeling between the Germans and Americans. Sometimes they would be accompanied by the little bugler, who had a strange weakness for keeping their company, and, indeed, blowing his trumpet for them in exchange for a sixpenny dram, to which they would frequently invite him. It is indeed doubtful whether Company B would have been made up in New York, had not Captain Henry B. Todd stepped in and with remarkable energy filled up its ranks.

There was among the Germans a short, fair-haired man of ponderous dimensions, weighing more than three hundred pounds, and blessed with a good temper. He was short of legs and body, had a strange gait, and required the aid of four men to mount his horse. His name was Hurtzog, and he was known in the regiment as little Bob, the light-horseman. Bob was a right merry fellow, was kind to his men, never out of temper.

brave withal, and continually falling in love with little women. He was fond of dancing, and could sing tolerably well. In truth, he afforded us much amusement, and was always ready to enjoy a joke made by any one at his expense. I mention him here because he performed some amusing parts during our campaign on the Peninsula.

## CHAPTER IX.

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### SUNDRY MATTERS.

I may, perhaps, have written much that may seem of a personal character, and not particularly interesting to the general reader. My object, however, is to show how one or two improper, as well as incompetent persons, fastened on a regiment through intrigue and fraud, and whose loyalty is at least open to suspicion, may destroy discipline and endanger the usefulness of that regiment. This was the case with our regiment; and it was not the only one in the Army of the Potomac that had to contend against the bad influence of a few officers, obnoxious to the rest of the regiment. On the breaking out of the war the worthless men who had fastened themselves on the public institutions of the country during the administrations of James Buchanan and Pierce, found themselves discharged and out of employment. Many of these men were as rank secessionists as were to be found under the immediate shadow of Mr. Jefferson Davis. The outward signs they gave were no proof of what their hearts felt and their hands would have done, were it not for the fear of detection and that loyal public sentiment, then so thoroughly

aroused. These men must have something to do, and finding themselves dismissed from offices they had disgraced, fastened themselves on the army only to corrupt it. Those familiar with the many obstacles General McClellan had to overcome in organizing the Army of the Potomac, also know how much trouble these men gave him. Innocent of all military knowledge, and carrying into the army with them all that spirit of intrigue common to the petty politician, they were continually increasing the labors of generals, continually spreading dissensions among the men for selfish motives, and never found attending to their proper duties. Many of these worthless men sought and obtained positions as quartermasters, a position regarded, when the war began, as affording the means of making a great fortune in a short time. What their peculations have cost the nation is too well and painfully known to the people. Political influence obtained for others positions as field officers ; this over the heads of worthy, loyal, and brave men. Feeling their own incapacity, many of these men sought to screen it by leaving to more competent subordinates the labor Government was paying them to perform. The Administration was in a measure to blame for this, since in its haste to conciliate the opposite party, it was constantly giving places of high trust in the army to men known to be without character, and utterly unfit mentally or morally to fill them. I have noticed also, that the most worthless of these men were the most ambitious of rank and pay ; generally succeeded in getting both. It is safe to say that one worthless officer costs the Government

ten times as much as an efficient one. Indeed I think I am not wrong in saying that I have known officers attached to the Army of the Potomac, whom the Government might, with profit to itself, have paid to fight in the ranks of the rebels. Experience has shown me also, that one disloyal officer in our own ranks, can work a more damaging influence than a whole regiment of the enemy in our front.

It was now July. The Germans had carried a very high feather for some time, passing us with an air of coldness and high military superiority, and it was evident that some influence was at work exciting a very bad feeling between us. We were for some time at a loss how to account for this feeling, but as it grew deeper and deeper every day, and was likely to be very damaging in its results, means were instituted to discover its source. It was soon discovered that the big politician was at the bottom of it. In order to make friends with the Germans he had hung about their camp, shared their hospitality, flattered their vanity, and caused them to believe that the Americans were all intriguing against them. He could do a great deal for them, and intended to do it. He was their true friend, and all they had to do was to stand by him. He always did like the Germans, and it was the regret of his life that he could not speak their language. The Americans were jealous of his wealth and his power; but he would show them that they must do justice by the Germans. This was but a specimen of the means the big politician used to effect an object. He had set his heart on being quartermaster of the regiment, and was

using this means to get the German officers to recommend him as a fit and proper person for the position. His mischievous propensities, however, did not rest here, for he sought among the Americans, and used similar means to excite bad feeling against the Germans. This war, I may say, and with truth, has had no more remarkable character, for while he was restless in spreading mischief, he could not be got to attend to his proper business for an hour; and there was no indignity he would not submit to with a bow.

There was great excitement at headquarters one day, caused by a letter just received from the collector of the port, making a strange disclosure in which the loyalty of our political friend was involved. A group of our officers stood in the centre of the ring as I entered, and I recognized the manly figure of Harry Hidden, his face flushed with indignation. Anything mean or deceitful found a terrible enemy in Harry, and he was giving vent to his feelings in strong and earnest language, at the traitor who dared show himself among us in the disguise of a loyal man. The letter was handed me to read and suggest some course of action. I must say here also, that it was shown to our colonel. Having had good reasons for suspecting the loyalty of the big politician, and hearing that he had been employed in the Custom House, one of our officers wrote to the collector making inquiries concerning him. This letter contained the reply, which set forth that he had been dismissed for open and avowed sympathy with the traitors of his country. And this was the man who had given us so much trouble; who was working to be

made quartermaster of the regiment—a position where he could distress brave men and plunder the Government he secretly hated. He was called up by Ogle and others as soon as he appeared at headquarters, and asked what he had to say in reply to the grave charges contained in the letter, which was handed him to read. His answers not being satisfactory, he was given to understand that hereafter his absence from headquarters would be more welcome than his presence. We all now enjoyed a feeling of relief, and flattered ourselves that we had got rid of a man who had given us much trouble, and whose presence in the regiment could not fail to have a damaging effect.

And now I must turn to a different phase of our organization, and, for a time, leave our political friend in obscurity.

It was interesting, as well as instructive, to witness the distinctive traits of national character developed by recruits as they presented themselves for enlistment. The American joined the service because he wanted to serve his country and put down the rebellion. So did the Irishman, whose earnestness was such that no man could question his loyalty. Englishmen were full of conceits, did not care much about the war, were willing to fight on that side which paid best, and as the Americans didn't know much about war, were sure always to want to give us a great deal of instruction as to how they did it in their country. While a few of us were seated in the office one day, quietly enjoying our pipes and suggesting plans to get some of the companies mustered in, a little bandy-legged Englishman presented

himself, and with an air of great self-importance demanded to see the recruiting officer. He had on thick-soled shoes, his bandy legs were incased in a pair of tight-fitting breeches; a short blue coat with huge side pockets scarcely reached his hips, and a tall hat, of sloping crown, gave a quaintness to his short figure. "Seein as 'ow you wus raisin a cavalry regiment," said he, addressing one of our officers, "I thought I'd just drap hin 'an see if you'd han hopinin for a mon whoes a first rate rough rider. Docant hunderstand nich about rough ridin in this kuntry, I take it?"

In reply to an inquiry as to where he had served, he said: "In Lunnun, sir. Bien rough rider to Lord Cardigan: he as fought so hin the Crimear. Eard o' him, sir, 'spose? Dun a deal o' rough ridin, here and there. Seein in the journals as 'ow you wus a raisin a regiment, I says to mysel, here Hugh, a chance now offers to get the possishun as hinstructor in rough riding." Here the little man, who was the very picture of an English groom, began to draw from a side pocket numerous grimey papers, which he said bore testimony to his character as an honest man as well as his skill as a rider. It was agreed among us that something must be done for the rough rider. We proposed to make him a lieutenant of cavalry and general instructor in rough riding, though no such position could be found in the Regulations. Would he give us a taste of his skill before we enrolled him a candidate for the parchment? That would just suit him. If any gentleman "'ad a oss as wusent wiel broken to the zaddle," let him be brought out, and he would show us two or three



things in rough riding none of us Americans had seen before.

Now, as I have before said, there was in the regiment one Sergeant Ditcher, a poor but honest man. He had served under Lord Cardigan, and was one of the very few who returned from that desperate charge at Balaclava, led by the brave Nolen. An admiring friend had made Ditcher a present of a horse, a brute so vicious that few dare go near him. It required some courage as well as skill in horsemanship to mount this animal, for when he took it into his head he would unsaddle his rider in a trice. The horse was brought out, and the ring prepared for an exhibition of the rough rider's skill. He examined the bit and found fault with it; he found fault with the headstall, with the apparent docility of the animal. He called the saddle (McClellan) a rocking chair, made of wood when it ought to have been made of leather. The foot guards no skillful rider in his country, he said, would think of using. In England, saddles were made of pig skin, and her Majesty saw that her troopers all had soft seats. After the little rough rider had exhausted his fault-finding propensities we induced him to mount, which he did with some effort. Once or twice the animal bounded wildly around the ring. Some one cracked a whip, he stopped, made a sudden back motion, and the teacher of rough riding was seen turning a somersault over his head. The horse stood motionless over the prostrate figure on the ground. But the unfortunate rider was soon on his feet, saying he was not hurt much, and lamenting the destruction

of his tall hat, and the damage otherwise done to his breeches. He would not give in to a horse like that, he said; and to show us that the misfortune was entirely owing to his own carelessness he would mount again. Of course we admired his courage, and had excuses enough for the accident, which might have happened to any one. After a good deal of frisking and rubbing and brushing he mounted again, when the animal set off at increased speed. Once, twice, thrice, he went round the circle at a furious rate; then with a sudden bound he threw the rough rider from the saddle, his head striking with great force against the woodwork of the ring. He was picked up seriously stunned. Whisky was brought, and sundry applications internally as well as externally soon restored him to consciousness and sound health. A dollar rewarded him for the exhibition he had given us of his horsemanship; but he was vain of his skill, and "would like to show us gentlemen that he was not the man to give in to a 'oss like that un." We invited him to come the next day and give us a second lesson, and he promised to do so. He took his departure soon after, and that was the last we saw of her Majesty's rough rider.

## CHAPTER X.

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### MUSTERING IN.

The middle of July was come, and the War Department has changed its policy, so far as it respected cavalry. I have already described how opposed it was to the employment of cavalry when the war began. It now seemed more than impatient to get cavalry regiments organized and sent forward. We received despatch after despatch from the Secretary of War, from General Scott, and other high officials, urging the necessity of filling up our regiment "at once," and sending it forward. It was a weakness of the War Department at that time to do its business with bankrupt editors, speculators with doubtful antecedents, and ambitious keepers of hotels. The despatches sent were not directed to the colonel of the regiment, but to Mr. Clarke, Mr. Stetson, (Astor House,) and others; showing either that there was a very confused state of things in the Adjutant General's office, or that Mr. Cameron preferred to do the military business of the nation through his political friends.

McDowell was at this time preparing, or trying to

prepare, his militia troops for a grand dash on the enemy at Manassas. He said, or some one had said for him, for it was current in Washington at the time, that he had not a cavalry officer upon whom he could rely to make a proper reconnoissance of the enemy's position. The War Department may have had some knowledge of this, which may account for its sudden waking up to the fact that there existed a necessity it had not before discovered. This haste on the part of the Government, however, had a good effect on our officers, and excited them to renewed efforts to fill their companies, each rivalling the other to get mustered in first. According to orders from the War Department, companies could not be mustered in until they were full. This policy cost us a great many men, who, impatient to get into the field, would stray away and join regiments just leaving.

Through the exertions of Ogle, Bailey, and Jones, Company A was nearly full. Todd was encouraging his recruits with a few dollars each, and being popular with his men was nearly ready to muster in. Harkins wanted but a few men to complete his number, and Stearns and Hidden, both ready to help a friend when he needed, had got a large number of men enrolled. Some of the officers looked on Stearns' men with a longing eye, and would occasionally send an old soldier into their ranks with a view to making them comrades in his own company. And this the old soldier generally did with a few glasses of whisky and a dollar or two. These little raids were conducted in perfect good nature, and as the sweet spirit of love ruled paramount in

Stearn's character he was generally selected as the subject of them.

About this time, a little, boyish and beardless man of the name of Bennett, brought a company down from Syracuse, where he had raised it. I doubt if Syracuse will ever sufficiently repay Captain Bennett for relieving her of this motly collection of men, many of whom must have been a terror to the place. The question was frequently asked where this young, innocent looking man, who dressed with scrupulous care, had picked up such a combination of human nature in its lowest form. Hogarth could not have drawn a better cartoon of human depravity, as pictured in the faces of these men. There was the model Bowery boy, as we used to see him twenty years ago, with his oily head, his expansive garments, and his love for brass buttons. There was the thick-framed and bullet-headed shoulder hitter, ready always to settle a private quarrel with friend or foe. There too was the wild, ungovernable youth, the misfortune of his parents, who were glad to get him into the army, as a fit place to reform his morals. These men seemed never without a quarrel. Indeed the company enjoyed a perpetual state of war, and when its members were not fighting among themselves, which was seldom, they were disturbing the peace of the neighborhood. Their officers had no control over them, and an attempt to enforce discipline enjoined a risk they were not willing to undertake. Indeed the officers were inclined to treat their men on those terms of equality common among men in a country town, but which cannot be carried into the army without des-

troying discipline. And here let me say that I have frequently noticed that the class of men I have just described are rarely to be depended on in battle.

Captain Harkins was the first to fill his company, and after the excitement incident to the election of officers, which in many cases was a mere matter of form, the men were marched to the arsenal in Centre street, and the process of mustering in gone through. With some men mustering in is a test of courage. The timid see in it a solemn obligation to serve the country as a soldier for a term of years, to submit to all the rigors of martial law, to undergo all the vexations and hardships of camp life, to face death in battle, and what is more trying to the patriotic spirit of every honest soldier, to submit tamely to the tyranny and insults of officers unfit, as well by birth as education, to be their superiors. Many a man, anxious to do his part in putting down the rebellion, ponders these things over in his mind until fear gains the victory, and he falls out, unwilling to take the oath that is to make him a soldier. Instances of this kind occurred when our first company was being mustered in. Several who had marched in the ranks to the arsenal, dropped out before the oath was administered, and at one time it was doubtful if we should get the requisite number. The company however was mustered in without a man to spare. And then there was great cheering, great shaking of hands among the men, and exchange of congratulations between officers. Major General commanding a corps never felt prouder than did Harkins as he walked up and down in front of the men he said

he was to lead in battle, addressing them words of encouragement. This was to be a new phase in his life. The stage was a new one to him, and the part he had to play was strange and novel. Company B, Captain Todd, was next to muster in, and presented a fine appearance, for it was composed of men of a superior class. The companies, as fast as mustered in and provided with tents, were sent to camp in the breezy shades of Elm Park, to which the tents of our German companies had already given a picturesque and martial look. We had great trouble in getting the company of plug ruffians from Syracuse mustered in. Some of them left, or strayed away, as soon as they reached New York, and it was with great difficulty respectable recruits could be got to take their places. Day after day the mustering officer was summoned, and as often had to go away disappointed. Some of them would be away enjoying a fight with a friend, others might have been found at some bar-room, disabled by the too free use of whisky. At length, through the influence and superior energy of one Sergeant McCormack, the only man that seemed to have any control over them, the requisite number was got, and they were mustered and sent to camp, much to the relief of the neighborhood and every one about headquarters.

Stearns and Hidden, between whom there existed feelings that had grown and ripened into the truest friendship, had generously given their men to assist others in filling up their companies, and neglected themselves. They were now without men enough to muster in, and how to obtain them was a very difficult

problem to solve. Some of the means we had to resort to at times to get a man or two in order to make up the number required by the regulations were really of the meanest kind, although they afforded us some amusement. In one case, where it was found that we only lacked two men to fill up a company, a sergeant and two men (old soldiers) went out on a raid, and soon returned with a smutty blacksmith, to whom they had given five dollars to come and be mustered in for a soldier. This was given him with the assurance that as soon as mustered in he might go free. But the blacksmith was suspicious that we were setting a trap for him, exhibited much uneasiness during the process of being made a soldier, and was quick to take his departure as soon as the ceremony was over. The raiders also made forcible seizure of a poor inoffensive looking baker, on his way to his master's customers with a basket of loaves. The poor baker was frightened out of his wits, and lustily pleaded the necessity of getting bread to his master's customers in time for dinner. He was told that he would get five dollars to come and be sworn in for a soldier, after that he might go where he pleased. But he was not inclined to understand this way of making a bargain. He declared he did not want to go for a soldier, was indeed a poor but honest man, had a family of small children with stomachs to fill, and would never get absolution if he took an oath he did not intend to respect. The absolution seemed to trouble him most. But the sergeant and his comrades were insensible to these appeals, and while one took charge of his basket of loaves, the others brought



him by force into the building, where they threatened to hang him unless he consented to be sworn in for a trooper. The poor fellow consented at last, though in great fear that this was only a plan to deprive him of his liberty. Indeed it was with great difficulty he could be kept from breaking away during the ceremony of mustering in. When it was over he was given the five dollars, and speedily went about his business, declaring by the saints he never would be caught in such a scrape again. Many amusing incidents of this kind might be related, showing to what straits we were at times put to get one or two men to fill up a company.

And now the time had come for mustering in Company A, about which the big politician had caused us so much delay and trouble. We had seen nothing of either him or the melancholy man in black for several days, and fears were entertained, not that they had taken final leave of us, but that they had carried off the little bugler for some selfish purpose. It was very well understood that no man could blow his own trumpet better than the big politician, and what need the melancholy man in black could have for the little bugler, unless it was to carry his weighty sabre, none of us could tell. Nor could we understand the remarkable and deep sympathy existing between the melancholy man and the big politician, for while the latter was a man of huge stomach and small brain, a Falstaff in vanity, and exceedingly illiterate, the former was a man of cultivated tastes. Indeed he was something of an artist, as well as a poet, and was given to writing sonnets to ladies, and painting flowers for their albums.

Just as the company was about to proceed to the election of officers, we were all surprised to see the big politician come tramping into the circle in all his magnificence, followed by the melancholy man in black and the little shark-mouthed bugler. He stood expanding himself for a few minutes, then began circulating among and conversing with the men. One or two of them assured him he was immensely popular with every man in the company, and would undoubtedly be elected their captain. This gave him encouragement. He was sure they could not desire a more warlike leader. And he warned them not to forget how great a responsibility they were about to assume, and how necessary it was that they elect men of first rate military talent and gentlemen for officers. Such qualities, he was proud to say, he had been told he possessed. But that was neither here nor there; he had seen service in Mexico, and had a good record, notwithstanding some evil-minded persons (and he always loved his enemies) had said they could not find it.

Now the men of this company were remarkable for their intelligence, and received what the big politician said as a very good offset to the joke they were attempting to play on him. Indeed they induced him to write a vote for every man, to whom he gave particular instructions what to do with it. But, to the great surprise of all those not in the secret, when the votes came to be opened and counted they were all for Ogle, who was proclaimed captain with loud cheers. The big politician affected not to understand this; thought the men must have made a mistake, shook his head, and

at last intimated that he would go where first rate military talent was in better demand. "Hard, hard," he said, running his fingers through his bushy hair, "that when a man is brave he can't have a chance to show it." Some of the men expressed great sympathy for him. One hoped to meet him on the battle-field. Another intended to vote for him, and it was through a mistake that he did not. A third declared him fit for a Brigadier General. A fourth knew he would get the stars if the authorities at Washington only knew as much of him as we did. He had a bow for every one of these compliments. There he stood for some time frisking his fingers through his shaggy hair, and hinting that the time would come when first rate military talent would be appreciated. Again he took his departure, followed by the melancholy man, who, at that time, was always to be found in his shadow.

We had now nine companies mustered in ; eight in New York and one under Captain Boyd, in Philadelphia. And I must here say that Captain Boyd was making great efforts to be the first company of volunteer cavalry in the field.

## CHAPTER XI.

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### BULL RUN.

At the time these pleasant and somewhat amusing scenes were being performed in New York, (say from July 17th to July 23d, 1861) others of more terrible importance to the nation were being enacted on the plains of Manassas. The first battle of Bull Run, if indeed it rises to the dignity of a battle, had been fought with most disastrous results to the nation's honor and arms. The nation's brain was reeling under the burden of its conceits when this battle was fought, and the political folly that assumed to control the action of our army was clearly illustrated in the result. An army of thirty thousand men, composed chiefly of undisciplined militia, good enough for ornaments in fair weather, but not to be depended on as fighting soldiers, badly officered and indifferently equipped, vain of its own strength and yet so weak that it was ready to crumble to pieces under the first shock of battle, marched forth with great pomp and circumstance, confident of its ability to crush an army equal in numbers, holding positions of great strength, and whose

power in earnestness and courage our rulers at Washington had not thought it worth while to consider. There were those who expressed great surprise that this thing of show and glitter, of such great cost to the people who had fondled it as a child fondles a new toy, should have been beaten. But there was really nothing in it to be surprised at. Folly always pays such penalties for its crimes. What, indeed, was to have been expected of an army in which whole regiments, on the eve of a battle in which their country's honor was to be staked, refused to obey orders and asserted their right to return home because their last day of enlistment was come? In other regiments officers were encouraging a spirit of insubordination among their men because of some fancied default in rations on the part of Government. And, too, there were regiments that broke up and scattered at the firing of the first gun. One regiment was so ready to exchange its honor and the honor of the country for its own safety, as to march off the field with the echoes of the enemy's guns sounding in its ears. In a word, there were far too many in the ranks of this showy army who considered themselves the superiors of their officers, and who were always ready to make personal considerations an excuse for their bad actions. To hold a general responsible for the acts of such an army is to insist that he shall do what is beyond the power of man.

While, however, other nations regarded war as the greatest scourge they could be inflicted with, and requiring their most serious attention, our people had felt none of the horrors incident to it, and were inclined

to treat it in the light of a novelty ; something out of which money was to be got, and profit made by the excitement it was to keep the country in while it lasted. This truth finds an apt illustration in the conduct of that immense rear guard of civilians of all classes that swarmed over the hills and spread over the fields of Fairfax county ; that followed and blocked up the roads in the rear of the army, and made itself joyous with the hope of being an amused spectator at a slaughter of human beings. There, mingling in that strange mob, were grave Senators and common excitement seekers, Congressmen and gamblers, political charlatans and the professional gentleman common to Washington, the writer, the actor, and the artist, the woman of chaste virtue and the painted harlot. Light-hearted and giddy-headed, the anxiety with which each pressed forward to be at the scene of battle first, reminded one of the Romans of other days, when they went to a fight between wild beasts, or the English of to-day as they fill the roads on their way to the Derby races. And then there was to be a feast after the fight, and such as could carried with them abundant luxuries to spread the banquet tables. These scenes, which every serious thinker contemplates with a feeling of sadness, did no credit to either the heads or hearts of those who participated in them. They were there as excitement seekers, and nothing else ; they were there hoping to find enjoyment in the most savage scenes human ingenuity can devise. But the injury did not stop here. It interfered with and confused the action of the army, excited the fears of the timid, and greatly increased

the magnitude of our disasters when we retreated. The wonder is that such an army, surrounded by so many bad elements, commanded by a general it soon saw was unequal to the position, and fighting under such adverse circumstances, should not have been thrown into disorder and panic sooner.

Let us turn now and look at the southern army as it appeared on the day of battle. A lower state of civilization ruled in the ranks of that army; but candor compels us to admit that it was better officered and more capable of effective handling than ours. These were, indeed, essential advantages in the fighting material of our army. And then the officers of that army were stern, earnest, and resolved. We cannot deny many of them the claim that they believed they were there to fight for principles as dear to them as liberty itself. It was our error not to place a proper value upon this stern earnestness of the South when the war began. And, too, the men composing the rank and file of the southern army were stimulated to action by the firm belief that they were fighting for their homes and all that is dear to home. That belief had increased into a fanaticism more terrible and dangerous than that which at the North had driven our rulers at Washington to send an army into the field to fight before it was ready.

Nor must it be forgotten that the institution of slavery had done its part in making these men fierce fanatics and formidable in war. The institution required a severe discipline for its proper regulation; and the enforcement of that discipline had its effect in

steeling the hearts of the lower classes against suffering and torture. It made the ignorant white man brutal, and yet subservient to the intelligent and rich. It accustomed men to the use of arms, made them vigilant, reckless of human life, savage in dealing with the weak, and quick to put their courage to the test, if only for effect. Among the ruling classes slavery begat a spirit of command and feeling of superiority. The man who had been reared and educated among, and indeed all his life witnessed the utter abjectness of his slaves, whose word was law, and who felt that he was to be promptly obeyed in everything, was not to blame for considering himself a superior being, born to command. Southern society, too, had constituted itself a tribunal for the test of courage, and these tests, so frequently applied between gentlemen, engendered elements of character which, however much to be admired when under proper control, became fierce and warlike when aroused. It was the southern man's worst error that he carried this spirit of command and feeling of superiority out into the world with him, and in his haste to exercise them offensively over his equals, made enemies where he needed friends. These elements of character, however dangerous and to be deprecated in private life, were just what were required to make an army fierce and formidable. Our army had all these qualities to acquire through training and experience in the field. The northern man had also done much to increase the southern man's belief that he was much his superior in courage. And this belief, with its joint value in war, the southern man brought into the field



with him. Was it then matter for surprise that these armies, brought together under such circumstances, should have produced the result they did? The very savageness with which some of the southern regiments fought cast a feeling of terror into the ranks of our more undisciplined troops. Nor had the battle proceeded far when it became evident to both the officers and men of our army, that the southern troops were being handled with superior skill; that our general, if he had a definite plan, was taking no proper measures to carry it out. Some regiments were fighting without orders, and in confusion; batteries that lost their positions had no one to tell them where to take new ones; regiments that ought to have been active in the fight stood looking on; and the reserve stood waiting for orders it never received. All these things combined to excite the fears of our men, and once this fear broke into a panic, control was beyond human power. Soldiers and civilians became mingled in the confused and terrified mass, made more desperate in its struggle for safety by the shadows of a few cavalry-men the infantry had turned its back upon. The broad landscape now became dark with this terror-stricken mob, rushing back in wild disorder upon Washington, to alarm the country with a thousand stories of blood and savagery, and make the Government feel itself a mere child. General McDowell returned to Washington a forlorn soldier without an army. His army, if an army it might have been called, had got there before him, a disordered mob, scattered through the streets of a

capital it had left at the mercy of an enemy ignorant that its gates had been thrown wide open to him.

I have searched in vain through most that has been written on this battle for an intelligent analysis of the cause of the panic that seized on our troops. General Barnard says "we should have undoubtedly gained a victory but for the panic that seized on our troops;" and Doctor Bellows, an equally profound authority on military philosophy, says, "I am told that we really gained the victory, but threw it away on our fears." I have no doubt that both these wise conclusions will be fully appreciated by an intelligent people. Every military man of observation knows that fear and its effects have much to do in deciding battles. But when fear in an army degenerates into a panic, the cause must be looked for in its discipline and generalship. Some writer has said fear was the great quicksand of the human breast, but no one could tell where and when its sands were going to shift. It certainly makes children of timid men; and it even disfigures the actions, at times, of the brave. Shall we, then, a naturally brave people, credit to fear our first great misfortune on the plains of Manassas? We ought, I think, to look for it in the character of our generals.

Still, out of this great misfortune there came good. It taught us to distinguish between the value of a fair weather and a fighting soldier. It exposed the worthlessness of our conceits and reformed the ideas of the nation, if not the Government, as to what really constituted an effective army. It ought, also, to have opened the blind eyes of the Government to the real

value of military experience in conducting a war. But it did not. The dainty fingers of the men who had been most active in producing this disaster—in urging an army to fight before it was ready, were still permitted to meddle with the business of generals, and to work mischief for our cause. These men wanted to reverse the old standard rule of war, and place the reformer in advance of the soldier. Who is there to-day that can tell us what their attempts to make experiment take the place of reason has cost the nation in blood and treasure?

## CHAPTER XII.

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### IN CAMP.

Our little town under canvas, as it nestled among the deep green foliage and under the breezy shades of the tall trees of Elm Park, was fast filling up with a strange mixture of people. It began, too, to put on a busy and military air. The Germans and Americans had drawn well defined lines of distinction, and indeed pitched their tents on separate ground. There were Austrians, Prussians, Poles, and Hungarians composing the former, and, as a natural result, there was at times some bad blood manifested between "the nationalities." The Irish and Scotch joined the American companies, the former always being ready for a fight with "the Dutchmen," as they called the Germans. Now and then they amused us with a little tongue fight across the street, in which sundry challenges would be sent and returned; an Irishman offering to bet a bottle of whisky—of which dangerous fluid he had taken a little too much—that he could whip six Dutchmen; or a German offering to bet a keg of lager that he could whip ten Irishmen before eating his supper. Sometimes

these tongue battles ended with an Irishman and a Dutchman being sent to the guard-house to keep company and cultivate more friendly relations. Not unfrequently these quarrels were in pantomime of the fiercest description, one party not understanding a word of what the other said.

This camp life has its quaint lights and shades. It develops and brings boldly out all the good and bad qualities of men—all their virtues and their vices. Here the gentle and generous nature performs its mission of good for others. Here the firm will and the stout heart of the physically weak rise superior and assert their dignity over the man of coarse nature. Strange associations are formed in camp; warm, sincere, and enduring friendships spring up between men, and will be remembered and cherished through life. Charity takes a broader range in camp, heart meets heart in all its longings; strangers from a distance meet to become friends and brothers; tent shares its bread and its bottle with tent next door, and the faults and follies of men are judged in a more generous and Christian spirit than that which rules in higher places. Here every man tells the story of his life's love and disappointment. Here, over a pipe, after taps, the man who has roamed over the world in search of fortune, relates his strange adventures to his listening companions, whose sympathies he touches and whose bounty he is sure to share, for the world's unfortunates always find a warm friend in the true soldier. In camp, as our army is composed, rich and poor meet in the ranks as equals, and the educated and the ignorant find shelter

under one tent. They are here as brothers, enlisted for a common purpose, to stand shoulder to shoulder against a fierce enemy, and fight to preserve the very life of their country. And the arm finds strength when sure that true friends are near.

We had reached that stage when the realities of a soldier's life, and what was before us during the three years of our enlistment, became subjects of conversation. What dangers we would have to share, what hardships we should have to undergo, what scenes of blood to witness, and perhaps participate in; how many of us would fall in battle, or die of disease and neglect; how many of us would return to recount in pleasant homes all the vicissitudes of war our regiment had passed through, were subjects of contemplation as well as conversation. These subjects, too, were much enlarged by the old soldiers, who found apparent delight in exciting the fears of the timid and hesitating.

Love also had leaped the gates of our camp, and we had more than one case where the tender passion was yielding to the charm of Mars. Every fine afternoon a pretty, elastic-stepping girl of eighteen used to come tripping over the lawn, her black braided hair arranged in such beautiful folds, and her eyes beaming with love and tenderness, to see one of our handsome captains. We had several, and they were just out in bright new uniforms, which gave them quite a soldierly appearance. The other captains envied this one the beautiful captive he was soon, as report had it, to carry off. He would meet her half way down the lawn, and there was something for a bachelor to envy in the sweet

smile that played over her pale oval face as the distance shortened between them. Then there was the warm, hearty shake of the hand; he had a sly but honest way of imprinting a kiss on her peachy cheek. And there were other little love tokens so tenderly expressed that it needed only a glance to read in them how truly heart was speaking to heart. She would always bring him some little present. Then they would stroll together to the tent door, and sit talking their heart secrets until some duty called him away. I have seen her sit working some piece of worsted for him, her soft eyes looking up lovingly in his face as his hand stole under her shawl and almost unconsciously around her waist. And then he bid her such an envied good-by as he left her at the gate, and waved his handkerchief as she turned half way down the lane to toss a last fond adieu for the night. This was the high noon of their love dream, and Heaven was sweetening the enchantment with the perfume of flowers.

And there was a pretty blue-eyed blonde, with round, cherub-like face, and curls the breeze used to play with as she came tripping with such artless gaiety down the lawn to see one of our dashing lieutenants. Her tight-fitting bodice, cut after the fashion of a habit, gave a bewitching roundness to her form; and there was something so childish, so artless in her manners that it seemed as if Heaven had blessed her with the sweetest of natures. We called her the June flower of our camp, and gave her a hearty welcome, for her presence was like bright sunshine after a dark storm. She brought the young lieutenant flowers, put his tent

in order, and rollicked about with the air of a girl just from school. And the young lieutenant was so proud of her, patted her so gently on the shoulder, and spoke in such tones of kindness. And when they parted, I could see that a feeling of sadness invaded her light heart, for a tear would brighten like a diamond in her blue eyes, and then write the story of her love down her cheeks as she went away.

Our camp at times would also be enlivened by an aged, leather-faced woman in big spectacles. Armed with a bundle of tracts she would distribute them among us; tell us what the Lord was doing for us, and how we would need his help in battle, and must pray to Him, and read the tract before we slept. This aged lady was in no very high favor with our parson, (we had got both a parson and a doctor,) who regarded her efforts as an infringement of his right to get us all made Christians in his own way. Nor did the doctor and the parson quite agree as to the best way to save the souls of soldiers. Indeed, they too often had their little differences as to what sort of medicine would best improve the spiritual and physical condition of the men. But the doctor generally got the best of it, for he was active and skillful, and what was more, gained favor with the men by setting them good examples, while the parson, eloquent enough in speech and prayer, was weak in the flesh, and so given to the bottle as to become its slave.

Love also had its votaries among our German companions across the road. A little frisky Dutch woman, with a bright bulging forehead, and a face like an over-fed



doll, and dressed in pink and blue, would come of an afternoon to see little Bob the light-horseman. Bob was now a lieutenant, had a tender and generous heart, and never went into a neighborhood without falling in love with all the small women in it. There was no happier being in this world than Bob when the little frisky Dutch woman sat at his side in front of his tent, with empty beer kegs for seats. She always brought something good for Bob, which they enjoyed with the addition of a bottle of Rhine wine. The captains, too, had their jolly buxom wives, who came and spent the day, setting their husbands' tents in order, preparing good dinners, and adding an air of cheerfulness to the camp. Indeed our German side of the camp seemed to be in favor with the women, who brought abundance of good cheer to their friends.

Notwithstanding the pleasant scenes I have described above, they were at times marred with acts which told us how much bad blood had been stirred up by some one between the Germans and Americans. That there should have been any bad feeling between us was a misfortune, and arose solely from a misunderstanding as to the temper and intentions of the Americans towards the Germans. This misunderstanding was caused by the bad influence of one man. Indeed, the Americans were kindly disposed towards the Germans, and ready to give them credit for more knowledge of cavalry, and better skill as soldiers. In truth, all that was required to make us good friends was a better knowledge one of the other, and the exercise of a conciliatory spirit. And these followed when we had

been a short time in the field, and formed a better acquaintance. In truth, the time came when American officers were so much in favor with the men of the German companies that they were pleased when placed under their command. This was no doubt owing to the fact that American officers were more tolerant and less severe with their men than the Germans. Indeed, I have noticed in regiments made up chiefly of Germans that there was no very good feeling existing between the men and their officers.

It becomes now my duty to record the first appearance of a battle. The morning of the 28th of July was warm and sunny. It was nearly noon when the calm of our camp was suddenly broken by signs of war. The hotel near by was the scene of great commotion. Somebody had insulted somebody. Angry words had been exchanged for blows. The slumbering unity of the nationalities had become disturbed, and it seemed as if satisfaction was to be got only through the sabre and pistol. The commotion which began at the hotel, soon spread to our camp, and officers and men were only too ready to take part in it. Men did not stop to think, while the report ran with lightning speed that there was a fight between the Germans and Americans. Officers buckled on their sabres and, grasping their pistols, called on their men to form in line. The little bugler, who had been roaming here and there in search of some one to give him an order, raised his horn and blew what sounded very like "boots and saddles." Then he seized a big knife in one hand, and with his bugle in the other, took position at the right of Com-

pany A. The fat Dutch bugler was not to be outdone by the little bugler, and raising his horn blew a most discordant strain, sending the ruddy faced Dutch women screaming to the tents of their husbands and sweet-hearts. Men armed themselves at this signal, some with sticks and clubs, others with rusty old sabres, crooked as reaping hooks, and of so strange a pattern that one of our officers declared they must have been used in the wars of the Assyrians who had bequeathed them to the ancestors of the Union Defense Committee, which loaned them to us with an injunction that we were not to take them to the field. The German officers seemed to have little control over their men, who turned out in great confusion, talked loudly, and threatened to do an immense deal of harm. Several times they broke into disorder, and advanced as if to make a sudden and desperate charge; and as many times they halted, as if to exhaust their courage in loud and fierce denunciation. The American companies were not to be daunted by loud talk, and stood firm, and with solid ranks, ready to receive the attack. German officers began expostulating with American officers, but as one could not understand a word the other said, the more they attempted to reconcile matters the more excitement they made among the men, who began to believe the trouble was to result in a fight between their officers. There was every sign now that blood would be shed, and the peace of the camp seriously disturbed.

Our little bugler blew another blast of his horn, and the officers told their men to stand firm, and the fat

Dutch bugler answered with a shrill blast from his horn. This was followed by a sudden movement on the German side of the field, as if a real charge was to be made. Two lucky circumstances occurred just at this moment, and to these circumstances I am indebted for not having to record what might have been one of the bloodiest battles in the history of this war. Little Bob, the light-horseman, with commendable courage, threw himself, with drawn sabre, among his countrymen and pleaded for peace. And just as he did this our colonel appeared on the field, and his presence was the signal for a stay of hostilities. Great effort was now made to get at the cause of the misunderstanding, to do which required the exercise of a good deal of patience. First the men were sent to their tents, to which they went with some reluctance. Then such of the officers as were most inclined to peace met in council, and after much and patient research, discovered what the cause of the trouble was, and likewise came to an agreement as to the satisfaction. It seems that a German had said or done something whereby the wife of one of our officers, a lady of very sensitive feelings, considered herself insulted. The husband came forward as the guardian of his wife's honor, as was natural enough, and threatened, or really did, chastise the offender. On this point, however, the testimony was somewhat confused; nor did what the little bugler said concerning it help to make it a bit clearer; for although he swore to seeing a "Dutchman struck in the stomach," to use his own language, he was of opinion the blow came from "another Dutchman," and not from the lady's husband.

It was now agreed for the Germans, on the first part, and the Americans, on the second, that the offender or offenders when found should be sent to the guard-house for two days on short rations; that they should be reprimanded and advised not to do so again. Now, as these terms were accepted as satisfactory, the husband regained his usual good nature, and the lady ceased weeping, and indeed spent the rest of the day in an innocent flirtation. As to the officers they spent the rest of the day over such good cheer as their friends had provided, thankful that they had escaped without a scar.

We were not, however, to leave Elm Park without a real fight; and the shedding of some blood. Tuesday, the 4th of August, witnessed a scene more serious in its results. At another point of the same park there was encamped the nucleus of a cavalry regiment, calling itself the "Lincoln Greens," which seemed like an attempt to steal the name of our regiment. These "Greens" were made up chiefly of Austrians, for whom the Germans of our regiment had the bitterest hate. There were the Prussians, who regarded them as arrogant cowards; the Hungarians, who despised them in their hearts; and the Poles, who only wanted an opportunity to pay off the old national score against them. It can readily be seen what a state of feeling must have existed between these conflicting elements.

The "Greens," too, were inclined to fly a high feather when speaking of our Germans. This bad feeling grew more deep and bitter every day. The men had enjoyed little fights between themselves, which their officers had regarded with indifference.

About two o'clock of the day I have named, several pistol shots, in rapid succession, were heard in the vicinity of the hotel, the scene where almost every disturbance began. These were followed by loud calls for help. Then came the clashing of sabres, the heavy blows of clubs, and such other weapons as were at hand. A report spread through the camp like lightning that the Germans of the Lincoln Cavalry were fighting with the "Lincoln Greens." The excitement became general. Officers and men seized their weapons and prepared for battle. Again the report of pistol shots rang on the ear, and word came that one man had been killed and two severely wounded. The fighting was on the brow of a hill, down which our Germans were being pressed slowly, before superior numbers. The American officers held their men in restraint, being inclined to let the Germans fight it out between themselves, and not caring much which got hurt most. Indeed, the only Americans much concerned about it were our colonel and the little bugler. The first gave orders our Germans neither understood nor obeyed, for, having armed themselves with all sorts of weapons, and particularly the old sabres of the Union Defense Committee, rushed up the hill to reinforce their hard-pressed comrades; the second made the noise and confusion more intense by blowing all manner of calls on his bugle. And these calls brought out the fat Dutch bugler, who blew away until his very face turned purple, making a noise that rose high above the clash of arms.

The reinforcements at once took up the fight, which

became desperate and bloody, considering the ancient character of the weapons they fought with. One wounded man after another was carried to a place of safety, bleeding. But the Greens were overpowered and began to fall back, at first in regular order, then in considerable confusion. The Germans fought with great earnestness, and were not inclined to show much mercy to their enemies, whose officers had sought safety in the kitchen of the hotel. Finally, there was a general rout of the Greens, who fled in disorder across the fields towards the park, followed and beaten by our infuriated troopers. The Colonel ordered the recall sounded; the little bugler ran until he was out of breath, mounting one stone wall after another, and sounding the recall, which echoed over the fields, unheeded. The fat Dutch bugler was ordered to follow and sound the recall, but he was no more successful in bringing back the fierce victors than was the little bugler. In less than half an hour from the time the fight began, not a "Lincoln Green" was to be seen in the adjacent fields. When our men returned, which they did of their own accord, they were cursed by their officers for scoundrels, and sent to their tents, to which they went willingly enough, knowing that what they had done had the secret, if not avowed, approbation of their superiors. Some of our German officers then made a search for the officers of the Lincoln Greens, and finding them in their various hiding places, cursed them right soundly for cowards who had incited their men to these desperate acts, and then refused to share in the result. High words passed and blows

had nearly followed, when our parson stepped in as a peace maker. And the good efforts of the parson, who declared that blood enough had been shed on the Lord's day, and that he would hold service in the afternoon, to which he invited them all, were increased by the pleadings of two frightened women, sweethearts of the Austrian officers, whom they saved from further harm by the profuseness of their tears. The result of this terrible battle, fought between the nationalities, on the friendly soil of Elm Park, and of which no account has heretofore been written, were three Lincoln Greens wounded, one seriously and two slightly. Two men of the Lincoln Cavalry received severe cuts. I must not forget to record here that this battle was fought without a general or reporter.



## CHAPTER XIII.

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FIRST REAL CAVALRY FIGHT OF THE WAR, WITH OTHER MATTERS.

On the 5th of August our American companies broke camp at Elm Park and moved to Bellevue garden, on the East river, leaving our German friends to reconcile matters with their Austrian enemies. It was a pleasant breezy spot, this new camp of ours, overlooking one of the prettiest scenes on the East river, and affording good bathing for the men. And we had kind and hospitable neighbors, whose families cheered us with their little gifts, and did all in their power to make our stay comfortable. These little attentions have always a good effect on the conduct of the men, since by them they are reminded how much they are thought of by those whom war does not call to the field.

The question began to be frequently asked why were we not off to the field, when there was so much need of us there. The fact was we were waiting for the tailor. We had been supplied with tents, but had not received our clothing. And the tailor was not to be hurried, though the fate of the nation depended on his efforts. The Government had ordered our uniforms

made in New York, and there had been a difference between the tailor and the Post Quartermaster, the tailor wanting a few cents more a suit than the Quartermaster was willing to pay. Hence the delay. In fact, there is no knowing how much our arms have suffered by these misunderstandings and banterings over a few shillings between exacting tailors and unyielding quartermasters.

While we were quietly smoking our pipes at headquarters one morning, news came that the big politician had been seen down town in a military cap, and yellow stripes down his breeches. This had a look of cavalry in it. Ogle cast a glance at Harkins; Stearns exchanged a sad expression of face with Hidden; Harry turned to Bailey, and shaking his head, said: "If there is any manhood left in the fellow, he won't make another attempt to get into this regiment."

"He will," said the man who brought the news. "He is doing it now. He has got authority from the Colonel to raise a company of Germans for this regiment, and as he won't understand a word they say, much happiness may he have with them. And I can tell you this, too," continued the man, knowingly, "he is raising money from citizens to pay his recruiting expenses."

"Money!" interrupted one of the company, "why, where is the fortune he has been boasting about? Like his common sense, we have not seen the color of it yet."

The news was indeed true, and cast a feeling of sadness over the Camp, since it foreshadowed the fact that a man was to be forced upon us whose presence in the

regiment was sure to keep it in perpetual trouble. That a man so very unacceptable to the Americans, and who had been rejected by them, should have been authorized to raise a company of men whose language he could not speak, showed us too plainly that some grave wrong was to be perpetrated. Now, there was among the Germans a man of the name of Gustave Otto, a Quixotic sort of person, who had dashed about in a gay uniform, big spurs, and a dangling sabre, and otherwise assumed the mighty man of war. Otto had served in the cavalry in Europe, knew something of the tactics, and was, so far as looks went, a soldier. But he was inclined to be cruel, and had an excessively bad temper, which led him into frequent quarrels with his fellow-countrymen. He aspired to the captaincy of one of the German companies; but failing to get a vote when they were organized, was left outside. In truth the men were afraid of him, just as ours were of the big politician. These two men now joined fortunes, and with the addition of the melancholy man, who still wore his black clothes, formed a sort of mutual sympathy society, for I must here mention that the last named gentleman, having failed to get a position in the regiment, had taken to writing poetry of a heavy order. This trio of forsaken men now held frequent meetings, discussed their misfortunes over frothy lager, and were joined by the parson, who evinced remarkable sympathy for them, and would share their cups until his mind got into a lofty mood. To tell the truth, Father Ruley had a free use of blarney when under the influence of his cups, and it was seldom he was not. "Faith, gen-

tlemen, there never was such injured men as yourselves since the world began. Leave the matter to me, and I'll have the three of you generals afore the war's over," he would say. But if they found sympathy in the parson, they were as thoroughly hated by the doctor, who was a man of courage, and said what he thought of them to their faces. I verily believe he would have found pleasure in making a pill to send them all to the devil, and thus end their mischief. He was willing to excuse the parson getting a little tipsey at times, but he would have him look better after the souls of the men, that being the business the country paid him for.

The authority then to raise this new "German company," was given to Otto and the big politician; to the first, that he might have a company to command; to the second, that he should be eligible as quartermaster when the regiment was organized, a position he had laid siege to with an energy worthy of a better cause. Captain Lord and Lieutenant Pendegrast, two gentlemen from Ireland, were also authorized to raise a company, and were exerting every energy to that end.

And here I must leave this stale matter for the present, and request the reader to bear me company into the field beyond Washington, where he shall witness the first cavalry fight of this war, for Captain Tompkins' charge into Vienna, dashing as it was, could not be called a fight. While we were quietly wondering and waiting under the breezy shades of Bellevue Garden and Elm Park—waiting for the tailor, and wondering when we should get orders to proceed to the

field, Captain W. H. Boyd, with an energy worthy of all commendation, had filled up his company in Philadelphia; was mustered in on the 19th of July; proceeded to Washington on the 22d, and in less than ten days from that time was mounted and equipped, and doing service in the field, scouting the country beyond Fairfax Seminary. Those who expect me to describe a battle, in which fierce charges and counter-charges were made, where great skill in the use of the sabre was displayed, and hand to hand combats were waged for the mastery; or, indeed, where any very clever horsemanship was to be seen on either side, will be disappointed. I am going to describe a cavalry fight just as it was, and just as any sensible man, with the slightest knowledge of cavalry, must have known it would be, made up, as one side was, of troopers fresh from their firesides in Pennsylvania, and to whom war was a new business. There were good men in this company, men not wanting in courage; but, like all other companies and regiments, it had its share of men who are quick to take alarm at the first sign of danger, and, what is worse, to so communicate their alarm to others as to make its effect general. Such men as these are always seeking to excuse their want of courage by casting reflections on the competency of their commander. It is true, however, that nothing so stimulates the courage of soldiers, and especially such as are new to the field, as the knowledge that their commander is a soldier and competent to take proper care of them in a fight. A fool for an officer will be sure to make brave men appear like cowards; and

nothing is so true as that in the Army of the Potomac we have had too many fools and knaves at the head of regiments of brave men.

It was early in August that Captain Boyd, with his company of gallant troopers, might have been seen winding over the hills beyond Fairfax Seminary, leaving the Little River turnpike to the left, and heading towards Fairfax Court House. Butler's Big Bethel, and Schenck's wonderful display of military science, as shown in his charge backward into the enemy's country with a locomotive and train filled with soldiers, were still fresh in the minds of our men. Masked batteries and ambuscades were our dread, and Captain Boyd very wisely felt his way with great caution. An advance guard was out, and flankers were kept constantly in motion. Every clump of woods ahead was regarded as an excellent lurking place for the enemy, now made bold by his success at Bull Run, and who had the advantage of knowing every foot of the country. These clumps of wood were the signal given every few minutes for a halt. This done, men were sent cautiously forward to scour the woods, or, in the event of discovering a force concealed there, to return and report. Several of these positions, regarded as extremely dangerous, were passed in safety, the gallant troopers breathing freer when the report came that no enemy was near. And I am sure there were no braver troopers to be found than our boys when they heard the advance sounded, and were told that the road ahead was clear. Nor must I forget to mention here that the gallant captain heard only with one ear. The other, how-

ever was particularly sharp, and the quickness with which he lent it to the amusing reports of every negro he met in the road was remarkable. If the negro carried a bundle, and were a fugitive in search of freedom and our lines, his appearance was sure to cause a halt. In most cases the negro was a prodigy of intelligence, a perfect index to all rebel secrets, an intimate acquaintance of Mr. Jefferson Davis, and very recently enjoying friendly relations with General Beauregard, who had, while at breakfast one morning, given him the exact strength and position of his army. Here was a storehouse of valuable knowledge, just what our general in command wanted, what the country needed, and what the necessities of a free press demanded for the entertainment of its readers. The gallant captain knowing what a hungry ear the public had for the stories of these very reliable colored gentlemen fresh from Secessia, would send them as fast as picked up to headquarters. Indeed, he was already becoming famous for the amount of this kind of loose wisdom he had secured for the benefit of the country. The trouble with this person, known subsequently as the "intelligent contraband," was that he knew so much more of the rebel army than it was possible for even General Beauregard to know, that our generals were astonished rather than instructed by the magnitude of what he had to tell.

If, also, a hapless farmer left his plow and came to peer over his gate at the uncommon sight, a halt was called, and the farmer made to discover all he knew about the country ahead; how the roads ran, and where they intersected; whether he had seen any of

the enemy, in what force they were, and indeed all he knew concerning the enemy and his movements. And this poor hapless man was made to say much he did not want to say, and in his fear give such information to-day as might appear wrong to-morrow. He must save his property, and keep his family from starvation ; to do which he must be a Union man to-day and a rebel to-morrow, just as one force or the other might charge down upon his acres. The rebels will to-day threaten to burn his house down over his head unless he tells them all, and in truth more than all, he knows concerning our movements. To-morrow some Union officer, flushed with the great importance of small power, will threaten to burn his house down unless he discloses all the information concerning the enemy in his possession. The question recurs to him, what is a poor man to do with two such friends ? I can affirm that between them both his house is almost sure of being burnt down, and his family sent to wander homeless, perhaps among unsympathising enemies. One party would not believe him when he told the truth, the other always suspected him of knowing much more than he was willing to tell. He might to-morrow discover an enemy in the officer he had to-day mistaken for a friend. I have come to believe that no greater misfortune can befall a man than to live on ground separating the fronts of contending armies during war. Both are sure to want his sympathy, to distrust his sincerity, and neither can give him permanent protection—the only thing that will make him of any real value to either side. The Government cannot, or will not, give him power to assert



his manhood to-day; to-morrow it may make him a martyr to events he had no part in producing. He was indeed fortunate if he escaped being made a prisoner, and carried off by some young officer, vain of his authority and in search of promotion. If you would know the number of these hapless and now homeless beings, you may read it on those tall gaunt and black piles by the road-sides of Virginia, writing their tales of wantonness in clear and sharp lines against the midnight sky. These black remnants of war are no proof that treason once had a hiding place here. They mark alike the spots where good Union men, as well as rebels once had happy homes.

I have wandered somewhat from my subject to show how dangerous it was to act upon information picked up in the manner here described, and more especially at that time. The Government had great faith in the "intelligent contraband," and so had the "friends of the party;" but our generals in the field knew that on questions of fact he was somewhat like his rebel master, a very uncertain person. Boyd and his company of gallant troopers advanced cautiously, exploring the country rod by rod, and mile by mile; halting every few minutes to pick up information, after the manner described above. They had now reached a piece of woods, were advancing through it and approaching a spot where the road forked and opened into a clearing. A halt was suddenly made, the flankers closed in quickly, and the advance guard was seen returning at rapid speed, and making such signs of "danger ahead" as spread general alarm among the men. One

of the advance guard came up, and reported "a large army of the enemy" just ahead and moving down upon us. Delivering his report in a hurried and excitable manner, the man was about to put spurs to his already jaded animal, and make the best time he could back to the Seminary; but the company, which had been advancing by fours, now stood in that position, blocking up the road. This, however, only seemed to increase his excitement, which had already begun to show its effect injuriously on a majority of the company. The captain hesitated for a minute, as if undecided what to do, or what command to give next. Cavalry movements require quick thought and quick action. Two more of the advance guard were seen returning, and increasing their speed as they advanced. Seeing the captain hesitate, some of the men mistook it for deficiency of knowledge in the tactics. Now there was an old cavalryman in the company, and it was charged upon him that he gave the command: "By fours, left about, wheel—forward!" It matters not who gave the command. It is enough to know that the company got about in some confusion, and away it went over the road towards camp, some trotting, some galloping, others having enough to do to keep themselves in the saddle and their horses in the road. It flashed suddenly on the mind of the gallant captain, who was not wanting in courage, that his men were running away before they had seen the enemy, or even tested the metal of his sabres. And it was punishment enough

that he had to follow them in retreat, instead of leading them against the enemy in a good fight.

One of the two advance guards I have described as seen returning, rode up to him and, luckily for the honor of our arms, on the side he was sharp of hearing on. "Captain," said the man, "the enemy is not in large force. It is a troop of cavalry, not stronger than we are, if as strong. They are halted. You know —— is short of sight. There is cattle grazing near them, and these he mistook for cavalry in reserve." Catching what the man said with remarkable quickness, Boyd called his son, a fine young man of twenty, and bidding him follow, dashed after his troopers, and gaining the head of the now disordered column, drew his pistol, and placing himself in an attitude of resistance, commanded them to halt or he would shoot the first man who disobeyed orders. Seeing their captain so determined, they halted and formed in order, when he addressed them, appealing to their honor as men, to their courage as soldiers. Pointing to his son, he told them he was willing to sacrifice his own life and that of his son, rather than have it said they were cowards. He had more to lose than they had, but if they would stand by him, and go back and meet the enemy, he would stand by them. His words fell like electricity on the men's feelings. Courage now took the place of fear. They cheered and expressed their anxiety to be led on to the fight. Wheeling by fours they were soon faced about and proceeding back at a brisk trot. They soon met the enemy in the edge of an open ground, when he prepared for action,

his force being about equal to ours. The captain formed his men in line, advanced until he got within carbine range, and then made a sudden dash upon the enemy, the men discharging their pieces as they closed up, and emptying two saddles. The suddenness and impetuosity of the dash surprised the enemy, for he broke in confusion and scampered down the road, our men cheering and pursuing. They soon came to where the road forked, and here the enemy divided, a few of his troopers taking one road, and the larger number the other. Our force also divided, the larger number following the smaller of the enemy on one side, and the smaller the larger on the other. In this way they followed the enemy, at times discharging their pieces, until it became evident that he was close upon his infantry reserves. The recall was now sounded, the men fell back in good order, and returned to camp, victorious, but with the loss of one man killed. The effect of this little fight was never lost on the men. It taught them the true value of courage, and also what advantages were to be gained by these sudden and impetuous charges on the enemy. After this they were always quick to charge whenever they met the enemy; and no company of cavalry did better service, or performed its duty more satisfactorily during the memorable seven days' battles before Richmond.

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